
**Harmonist 2007 Kartika
Editorial**

On the auspicious occasion of the appearance of another issue of *Rays of the Harmonist*, we pray for the blessings and causeless mercy of Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga in our endeavours to please (*toṣaṇī*) those who are real seekers of the Truth (*sajjana*). (*Sajjana Toṣaṇī* is also the name of the original *Harmonist* magazine).

“*Hari-guru-vaiṣṇava tinera smaraṇa, tinera smaraṇa haya vighna-vināśana* – Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇava – by remembering these three all obstacles are destroyed.” On the path to transcendence, the multitude of moods that are contrary to the true religion create many obstacles, but by the auspicious desire and compassionate glance of Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas all of these obstacles are dispelled. Therefore, *jagad-guru* Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has informed us, “*jāya sakala vipada, bhaktivinoda balena jakhana o nāma gāi*.” By becoming the servants of Śrī Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas, by surviving solely on their remnants and by taking complete shelter of *śrī nāma* all of our obstacles will be dispelled.

This truth is directly realized by the *mahā-puruṣas* who are beyond mortality. *Jagad-guru* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has mentioned, “By chanting *hari-nāma* with *sambandha-jṣāna*, one cannot be harmed in any respect.” This is the highest and sole solution to all types of problems on our spiritual path.

Despite living amidst various inauspicious elements in this world, those who are *sajjana* always search for the supreme auspiciousness within everything: “*sajjanā guṇamicchanti, puṣpebhya iva ṣaṭpadaḥ* – seekers of the truth always search for good qualities like bumblebees searching after honey-pollen in the flowers, not at all caring for its thorns.” This, indeed, is their *sādhū-vṛtti* (saintly propensity), and this is the *sama-darśana* or *sudarśana* of the *tattva-darśī mahā-bhāgavatā* as explained in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam śloka* “*tat te ‘nukampāṁ su-samīkṣamāno...*” It is the habit of great devotees of the Lord to accept worldly inconveniences, sufferings, diseases and troubles – or in other words the three-fold miseries – as favourable to their *bhajana*. Beyond worldly inconveniences and conveniences, they are situated in the plane beyond material qualities (*nirguṇa*).

In the present age, *Rays of the Harmonist* is unique in this world as a journal that preaches the truth, remaining indifferent to all (*nirapekṣa*). The statement, “*nirapekṣa nahile dharma nā yāya rakṣaṇe* – one cannot protect true religion (*dharma*) without becoming indifferent to everything that is unfavorable for it.” from *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya* 3.23) will always be the life and inspiration of this journal. If we have to face the greatest of calamities in order to maintain *nirapekṣata*, then we must be ready to embrace them to set an example of truthfulness to the world.

Although some apparent contradictions may be perceived in the respective teachings (*vāṇī*) of different *ācāryas*, they can be reconciled in light of the third *sūtra* of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s *grantha*, *Tattva-sūtra*, “*viruddhadharmaṁ tasmin na citram* – The existence of contradicting

attributes in the Supreme Absolute Truth is in no way astonishing, for it is entirely natural in Him” (from *Śrīla Ṭhākura Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda*). We pray that we may be counted as part of the glorious society of Śrī Gaurāṅga, and take shelter of the divine temple made of the *grantha-bhāgavat* and the *bhakta-bhāgavat*. By performing *kīrtana* of Kṛṣṇa’s glories from within that shelter, the global epidemics resulting from the contamination of impure sound can be mitigated and the *sat-cit-ānanda vastu* can be revealed. This can be accomplished if *siddhānta-vānī* is simultaneously preached and practiced. Then, when it is distributed through *Gauḍīya*, which is actually the Vaiṣṇava, the recipients will taste the nectar of the topics of Śrī Hari which has touched the lips of our *guru-varga* in the form of *mahā-mahā-prasāda*, and dancing and crying, “Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!” all will be initiated into Mahāprabhu’s *prema-dharma*. Then, someday, we may come to understand the profound depths of the pinnacle of true *prema*. Finally, we pray to *sarasvata-gauḍīya-guru-varga* for strength so that we may become instruments in distributing the message of the unprecedented compassion and *siddhānta* of Śrī Śrī Rūpa-Raghunātha in this world and become blessed by following their *vāṇī* in our own lives.

the spirit of this editorial was taken from the editorial of *Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā*, Year 21 (1970),

written by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana
Gosvāmī Mahārāja
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Śrī Govinda-devāṣṭakam
by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura

*jāmbu-nadoṣṇīṣa-virāji-muktā-
mālā-maṇi-dyoti-śikhaṇḍakasya*

*bhaṅgyā nṛṇām lolupayan dṛśaḥ śrī-
govinda-devaḥ śaraṇam mamāstu (1)*

jāmbu-nada – golden; *uṣṇīṣa* – turban; *virāji* – brilliant;
muktā – pearls; *mālā* – strings; *maṇi* – jewel; *dyoti* – glistening; *śikhaṇḍakasya* – of He who wears a crest of peacock feathers; *bhaṅgyā* – by its graceful curve; *nṛṇām* – of people; *lolupayan* – captivate; *dṛśaḥ* – the eyes; *śrī-govinda-devaḥ* – the delightfully play-ful Divinity, the Lord of the cowherds; *śaraṇam* – shelter; *mama* – my; *astu* – may He be.

The brilliant golden turban adorning His head embellished with strings of lustrous pearls, glistening jewels and a crest of gracefully tilted peacock feathers captivates the eyes of all. May He, Śrī Govindadeva, the delightfully playful Divinity, the Lord of the cowherds, be my shelter.

*kapalayoh kuṇḍala-lāsyā-hāsyā-
chavi-chaṭā-cumbitayor yugena
sammohayan sambhajatām dhiyaḥ śrī-
govinda-devaḥ śaraṇam mamāstu (2)*

kapalayoh – upon His cheeks; *kuṇḍala* – earrings; *lāsyā* – dancing; *hāsyā* – smile; *chavi* – splendour; *chaṭā* – lustre; *cumbitayor* – kissed; *yugena* – by the pair; *sammohayan* – completely enchants; *sambhajatām* – of those who adore Him (His devotees); *dhiyaḥ* – the hearts; *śrī-govinda-devaḥ* – the delightfully playful Divinity, the Lord of the cowherds; *śaraṇam* – shelter; *mama* – my; *astu* – may He be.

His lustrous smiling cheeks, kissed by His splendid earrings as they dance back and forth, completely enchant the hearts of His adoring devotees. May Śrī Govindadeva, the delightfully playful Divinity, the Lord of the cowherds, be my shelter.

*sva-preyasī-locana-koṇa-sīdhu-
prāptyai purovarti-janekṣaṇena
bhāvam kam apy udgamayan budhānām
govinda-devaḥ śaraṇam mamāstu (3)*

sva-preyasī – of His beloveds; *locana-koṇa* – from the corners of the eyes; *sīdhu* – the nectar; *prāptyai* – for obtaining; *purovarti* – who are directly present; *jana* – the people; *īkṣaṇena* – by glancing; *bhāvam* – mood; *kam api* – an indescribable; *udgamayan* – arouses; *budhānām* – in those persons who are expert in relishing *rasa*; *govinda-devaḥ*

- the delightfully playful Divinity, the Lord of the cowherds; *śaraṇam* - shelter; *mama* - my; *astu* - may He be.

Fervently seeking the nectar of His beloveds' loving glances, he searches the crowd standing before Him. This secretive behaviour arouses an indescribable *bhāva* in the hearts of those expert in relishing *rasa*. May Śrī Govindadeva, the delightfully playful Divinity, the Lord of the cowherds, be my shelter.

*vāma-pragaṇḍārpita-gaṇḍa-bhāsvat-
tāṭaṅka-lolālaka-kānti-sikṭaiḥ
bhrū-valganair unmadayan kula-strīḥ
govinda-devaḥ śaraṇam mamāstu (4)*

vāma-pragaṇḍa - left shoulder; *arpita* - tilted; *gaṇḍa* - cheek; *bhāsvat* - shining; *tāṭaṅka* - earrings; *lola-alaka* - His curling locks of hair moving to and fro; *kānti* - loveliness; *sikṭaiḥ* - sprinkled; *bhrū-valganaiḥ* - by the movements of His eyebrows; *unmadayan* - maddening with love; *kula-strīḥ* - ladies of exalted lineage; *govinda-devaḥ* - the delightfully playful Divinity, the Lord of the cowherds; *śaraṇam* - shelter; *mama* - my; *astu* - may He be.

His beautiful cheek tilted towards His left shoulder, His shining earrings, and His curling locks of hair moving to and fro sprinkle loveliness upon the graceful movements of His eyebrows, maddening the virtuous *vraja-gopīs* with love. May Śrī Govindadeva, the delightfully playful Divinity, the Lord of the cowherds, be my shelter.

*dūre sthitās tā muralī-ninādaiḥ
sva-saurabhair mudrita-karṇa-pālīḥ
nāsārudho hṛd-gata eva karṣan
govinda-devaḥ śaraṇam mamāstu (5)*

dūre - at a distance; *sthitāḥ* - situated; *tāḥ* - them; *muralī-ninādaiḥ* - by the sound of His *muralī* flute; *sva-saurabhaiḥ* - by His fragrances; *mudrita-karṇa-pālīḥ* - made an impression within their ears; *nāsā-rudhaḥ* - held their noses; *hṛd-gataḥ* - entered their hearts; *eva* - indeed; *karṣan* - attracting; *govinda-devaḥ* - the delightfully playful Divinity, the Lord of the cowherds; *śaraṇam* - shelter; *mama* - my; *astu* - may He be.

Although situated far away from the *gopīs*, He enchants their ears with the sound of His *muralī* and captures their sense of smell with the sublime fragrances emanating from His body, thereby entering their hearts and drawing them to Him. May Śrī Govindadeva, the delightfully playful Divinity, the Lord of the cowherds, be my shelter.

*navīna-lāvaṇya-bharaiḥ kṣitau śrī-
rūpānurāgāmbu-nidhi-prakāśaiḥ
sataś camatkāravataḥ prakurvan
govinda-devaḥ śaraṇam mamāstu (6)*

navīna-lāvaṇya – eternally budding loveliness; *bharaiḥ* – by the abundance; *kṣitau* – on the earth; *śrī-rūpa* – the graceful form of exquisite beauty (Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī); *anurāga* – deep attachment; *ambu-nidhi* – ocean; *prakāśaiḥ* – by the manifestation; *sataḥ* – of the devotees; *camatkāravataḥ* – by astonishing; *prakurvan* – makes; *govinda-devaḥ* – the delightfully playful Divinity, the Lord of the cowherds; *śaraṇam* – shelter; *mama* – my; *astu* – may He be.

His eternally budding loveliness – manifested upon this earth in great abundance from the heart of Śrī Rūpa, which is an ocean of deep attachment to Him – utterly astonishes His devotees by making them experience indescribable bliss. May Śrī Govindadeva, the delightfully playful Divinity, the Lord of the cowherds, be my shelter.

*kalpa-drumādho maṇi-mandirāntaḥ-
śrī-yoga-pīṭhāmburuhāsyayā svam
upāsayams tantra-vido ‘pi mantraiḥ
govinda-devaḥ śaraṇam mamāstu (7)*

kalpa-druma – wish-fulfilling tree; *adhaḥ* – beneath; *maṇi-mandira* – a temple made of jewels; *antaḥ* – within; *śrī-yoga-pīṭha* – the eternal seat of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa [surrounded by Their intimate eternal associates]; *ambu-ruha* – water-born lotus flower; *āsyayā* – sitting; *svam* – His own; *upāsayan* – worshipping; *tantra-vidaḥ* – those conversant with the methods of worship and the authorized codes for transcendental devotional service as prescribed in revealed scriptures (the *paścārātra*); *api* – also; *mantraiḥ* – with *mantras*; *govinda-devaḥ* – the delightfully playful Divinity, the Lord of the cowherds; *śaraṇam* – shelter; *mama* – my; *astu* – may He be.

Beneath a wish-fulfilling tree, in a temple made of jewels, He sits with Śrī Rādhā upon a lotus flower in the centre of *śrī-yoga-pīṭha* surrounded by Their intimate eternal associates. Even the devotees who are caught up in strict worship as prescribed by *tantra-śāstra* (*paścārātra*) are inspired to lovingly worship Him with *mantras* specifically intended to please Him. May Śrī Govindadeva, the delightfully playful Divinity, the Lord of the cowherds, be my shelter.

mahābhiṣeka-kṣaṇa-sarva-vāsaḥ
alaṅkṛty-anaṅgī-karaṇocchalantyā
sarvāṅga-bhāsākulayaṁs tri-lokīm
govinda-devaḥ śaraṇaṁ mamāstu (8)

mahābhiṣeka – of the grand ceremonial bathing; *kṣaṇa* – the moment; *sarva-vāsaḥ* – all the garments; *alaṅkṛti* – ornaments; *anaṅgī-karaṇa* – by revealing His body; *ucchalantyā* – by diffusing everywhere; *sarva-aṅga* – all His limbs; *bhāsā* – the illumination; *ākulayan* – agitates; *tri-lokīm* – the three worlds; *govinda-devaḥ* – the delightfully playful Divinity, the Lord of the cowherds; *śaraṇaṁ* – shelter; *mama* – my; *astu* – may He be.

At the time of His grand bathing ceremony, when all of His outer garments and ornaments are removed and His body is revealed, the beautiful lustre of all His limbs diffuses everywhere, overwhelming the inhabitants of all the worlds. May Śrī Govindadeva, the delightfully playful Divinity, the Lord of the cowherds, be my shelter.

govinda-devāṣṭakam etad uccaiḥ
paṭhet tadīyāṅghri-niviṣṭa-dhīr yaḥ
taṁ majjayan eva kṛpā-pravāhaiḥ
govinda-devaḥ śaraṇaṁ mamāstu (9)

govinda-deva-aṣṭakam – these eight prayers describing Śrī Govindadeva; *etat* – this; *uccaiḥ* – loudly; *paṭhet* – recites; *tadīya-āṅghri* – in His lotus feet; *niviṣṭa-dhīḥ* – intelligence absorbed; *yaḥ* – one who; *taṁ* – he; *majjayan* – will be bathed; *eva* – indeed; *kṛpā-pravāhaiḥ* – by a constant stream of mercy; *govinda-devaḥ* – the delightfully playful Divinity, the Lord of the cowherds; *śaraṇaṁ* – shelter; *mama* – my; *astu* – may He be.

He will certainly bathe anyone who loudly sings *Śrī Govinda-devāṣṭakam*, his mind fully absorbed in Śrī Govindadeva's lotus feet, in a constant stream of His mercy. May Śrī Govindadeva, the delightfully playful Divinity, the Lord of the cowherds, be my shelter.

Translated from *Śrī Gauḍīya Stotra Ratnamālā*
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Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja
by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

Only those who have faith in Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu are part of His society

After thorough deliberation we have concluded that mankind will greatly benefit through Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja, the society of Śrī Gaurāṅga. Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura has said “*ye vā māne, ye nā māne, saba tāñra dāsa* – Everyone is a servant of Śrī Caitanya, even if some accept Him as Bhagavān and others do not.”¹ Indeed, every Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava accepts that Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, the Absolute Truth.

Constitutionally, every living being is a servant of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. However, many do not accept this because they are afflicted by offences. Such people will certainly neglect this Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja, so what will the society do but remain indifferent to them? Those who hold Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu in high regard will participate in this society with one-pointed focus. What doubt can there be in this?

Three types of people have faith in Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu: (1) those who have faith that He is the Supreme Lord, (2) those who have faith that He is the topmost devotee, and (3) those who categorize Him as a great personality. However, as all three types respect Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu, they can be included within His society.

It is necessary to include in the society of Śrī Gaurāṅga the three types of people who have faith in Him

Those who perform *bhajana* of Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu, knowing Him to be the Supreme Lord, are His one-pointed devotees who are counted among His intimate associates. This category is further divided because even though some people know Śrī Gaurāṅga to be the Supreme Lord, they may not consider Him the object of their *bhajana*. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that everyone in this particular category demonstrates love for Śrī Gaurāṅga.

Those who consider Śrī Gaurāṅga to be the topmost devotee will certainly propagate love for Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu (*gaura-prema*) from time to time, even if they belong to another *sampradāya*. Persons in this category can never become disinclined to the promotion of Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja.

And those who consider Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu to be an ordinary devotee and a native social reformer also belong to His community. If the second and third categories are not included in the society of Śrī Gaurāṅga, then this society cannot be said to benefit the public at large. Taking care to bring them within the community of Śrī Gaurāṅga is thus an intelligent act.

Accordingly, the conclusion is that the society of Śrī Gaurāṅga comprises those great souls who hold Śrī Gaurāṅga as an ideal.

The members summoned to the society of Śrī Gaurāṅga, and the grand assembly of Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī of Kāśī (Vārāṇasī)

One question must be considered here: Does Śrī Gaurāṅga approve of such a society or not? If we examine the *śāstras* pertaining to *bhakti* we will observe that Śrī Gaurāṅga personally established the foundation of such a society during His *prakaṭa-līlā*, or manifest presence.

O reader, do you remember that in the holy place of Vārāṇasī a grand assembly was held in honour of Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu? It was organized by the *brāhmaṇa* from Mahārāṣṭra, who was an exceptional devotee and an associate of Mahāprabhu. He invited all the Śāṅkarite *sannyāsīs* and other *paramahamṣas* of Kāśī and specifically requested Śrīman Mahāprabhu to join that assembly so that Mahāprabhu would bestow His mercy upon them all, as well as manifest some of His opulence. Astonished upon beholding Śrīman Mahāprabhu's grandeur, those *sannyāsīs* rose from their seats and offered Him – the Lord of our hearts – the most elevated sitting place.

In that assembly Śrīman Mahāprabhu preached *śuddha-svabhakti*, or pure devotional service to Himself, and thus became worshipful by all of those present there. The *sannyāsīs*, their eyes brimming with tears, took shelter of His lotus feet. All varieties of people participated in that grand assembly, which was made more glorious by the presence of *paramahaṁsa sannyāsīs*, a multitude of *brāhmaṇas* who were engaged in fruitive activities, countless worldly minded people, devotees from every *sampradāya*, and the most elevated pure devotees such as Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrī Candraśekhara Ācārya, Śrī Tapanā Miśra and Śrī Paramānanda Kīrtaniyā. This is described in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

*āra dine gelā prabhu se vipra-bhavane
dekhilena, vasiyāchena sannyāsīra gaṇe*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 7.58)

The next day Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu went to that *brāhmaṇa*'s residence and saw the *sannyāsīs* of Vārāṇasī sitting there.

*vasiyā karilā kichu aiśvarya prakāśa
mahātejomaya vapu koṭi-sūryābhāsa*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 7.60)

Sitting on the ground, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu revealed His mystic power by manifesting extremely effulgent bodily lustre as bright as millions of suns.

*prabhāve ākarṣila saba sannyāsīra mana
uṭhila sannyāsī saba chāḍiyā āsana*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 7.61)

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's brilliant bodily effulgence attracted the minds of the *sannyāsīs*, and they respectfully rose, giving up their sitting places.

*āpane prakāśānanda hātete dhariyā
vasāilā sabhā-madhye sammāna kariyā*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 7.65)

Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī, however, personally caught Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu by the hand and with much honour seated Him in the midst of the assembly.

*prabhura miṣṭa-vākya śuni' sannyāsīra gaṇa
citta phiri' gela, kahe madhura vacana*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 7.99)

After hearing the sweet words of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the minds of the Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs* were moved, and thus they spoke pleasing words.

ye kichu kahile tumi, saba satya haya

kṛṣṇa-premā sei pāya, yāra bhāgyodaya

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 7.100)

“Dear Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, all You have said is completely true. Only one whose good fortune has awakened attains *kṛṣṇa-prema*.”

The founding of the society of Śrī Gaurāṅga and its success in preaching

By reading this narration, we can certainly understand that the original Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja in the house of the *brāhmaṇa* from Mahārāṣṭra was manifested by the desire of Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu. If He bestows His mercy upon us, the present society of Śrī Gaurāṅga will achieve similar success. If those who honour Śrī Gaurāṅga constantly cultivate an understanding of His glories they will become supremely pure Vaiṣṇavas within no time. Moreover, even if those who do not honour Him at all attend the society’s assemblies and thereby regularly hear sweet narrations about Him, they will also become gentle at heart. Moreover, they will eventually relinquish the impurity of their adherence to other *sampradāyas* and become wholly pure *bhaktas* of Gaurāṅga. As Śrīla Kavirāja Gosvāmī says in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 2.87)*:

yebā nāhi bujhe keha, śunite śunite seha,

ki adbhuta caitanya-carita

kṛṣṇe upajibe prīti, jānibe rasera rīti,

śunilei baḍa haya hita

If one does not understand Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s wonderful life and pastimes but nonetheless continues to hear about them again and again, love for Kṛṣṇa will be aroused. Gradually one will come to understand the tradition of *rasa*, the loving affairs between Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* and other associates of Vṛndāvana. Thus, simply hearing about Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu awards the highest benefit.

Only Vaiṣṇavas in the topmost class do not belong to any society

According to the scriptures, there are three categories of Vaiṣṇavas: *uttama*, *madhyama* and *kaniṣṭha*. Among them, the *uttama-vaiṣṇava*, or topmost devotee,

does not belong to any society. Nonetheless, his merciful presence in Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja will bring it much benefit. He inherently sees all beings in relation to Bhagavān and therefore he does not differentiate between what belongs to him and what belongs to someone else. Because he sees every living entity as situated within the Supreme Absolute Truth, He does not distinguish between friend and enemy, or devotee and non-devotee.

Śrī Haridāsa Ṭhākura, the topmost Vaiṣṇava, possesses all these *bhāvas*, or moods. Nonetheless, he has particular affection for the *bhakta-goṣṭhī*, the community of *bhaktas*, and He is devoted to the preaching of *bhakti*. As stated by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya-līlā* 4.100—3):

*avatāra-kārya prabhura – nāma-pracāre
sei nija-kārya prabhu karena tomāra dvāre*

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu descended with the mission to propagate the importance of chanting the holy name. Now He is accomplishing His own mission through you [Śrī Haridāsa Ṭhākura].

*pratyaha kara tina-lakṣa nāma-saṅkīrtana
sabāra āge kara nāmera mahimā kathana*

Daily you are chanting 300,000 holy names and speaking the glories of the holy name before all.

*āpane ācare keha, nā kare pracāra
pracāra karena keha, nā karena ācāra*

Some persons behave properly but do not preach the glories of chanting *śrī nāma*, whereas others preach but do not behave according to the principles.

*‘ācāra’, ‘pracāra’, – nāmera karaha ‘dui’ kārya
tumi – sarva-guru, tumi jagatera ārya*

In relation to the holy name you both behave in an exemplary way (*ācāra*) and preach to others (*pracāra*). You are the *guru* of all, for you are the topmost devotee in this world.

The duty of an intermediate Vaiṣṇava in Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja

The Vaiṣṇavas on the *madhyama*, or intermediate, level remain under the guidance of *uttama-vaiṣṇavas*, and are the benefactors of *kaniṣṭha-vaiṣṇavas*, neophyte devotees. Therefore, *uttama*- and *madhyama-bhaktas* are qualified for the *bhajana* section of Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja.² Although they may occasionally participate in the activities of the working section, they do not manifest their competence in such work like the *kaniṣṭha* devotees, who are fond of it. However, with the assistance of the *kaniṣṭha-vaiṣṇavas* they accomplish whatever work needs to be done.

Vaiṣṇavas in the *bhajana* section of Śrī Gaurāṅga's society commonly take pleasure in *nirjana-bhajana*, or solitary absorption in the holy name, and in *iṣṭagoṣṭhī* (a gathering of like-minded devotees in which they discuss their *iṣṭa*, worshipful Lord, and thus attain much satisfaction and pleasure). There are two types of *iṣṭagoṣṭhī*: personal practice (*ācāra*) and missionary work (*pracāra*). To maintain their practices, such Vaiṣṇavas remain engaged in reciting and hearing scriptures like *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and in performing *harināma-kīrtana*. At the time of preaching, they impart knowledge of *bhāgavat-tattva*, *jīva-tattva*, *rasa-tattva*

and the glories of the holy name of Śrī Hari, according to the qualification of the listener.

“Iṣṭagoṣṭhī” and “Vaiṣṇava society” are other ways of referring to Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja

The general society of Gaurāṅga was founded during the Lord's manifest pastimes in Vārāṇasī, and the *iṣṭagoṣṭhī* process was also established at that time. Vaiṣṇavas participated in some form of *iṣṭagoṣṭhī* even before the advent of Śrī Gaurāṅga. At Mahāprabhu's time also those *iṣṭagoṣṭhīs* were known as the “Assembly of Gaurāṅga” or the “Vaiṣṇava assembly”. Once, while in an *iṣṭagoṣṭhī* with all His associates at Siddha-bakula (in Purī-dhāma), Mahāprabhu spoke to Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī:

prabhu kahe,—“kaha, kene kara saṅkoca-lāje?

granthera phala śunāibā vaiṣṇava-samāje?”

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 1.130)

Mahāprabhu encouraged Rūpa Gosvāmī, saying, “Why are you hesitating out of shyness? You should recite the good fruit of your writing to the Vaiṣṇava assembly.”

Iṣṭagoṣṭhī also means kṛṣṇa-kathā-goṣṭhī

Without the association of *śuddha-bhaktas*³, or pure devotees, there is no question of holding an *iṣṭagoṣṭhī*. The word *iṣṭa* means “desired subject”, and *goṣṭhī* means “assembly”. These two words combine to form the term *iṣṭagoṣṭhī*, which refers to an assembly of *sādhus* who are devoted to *śuddha-bhakti*, or the practice of pure devotion. *Śuddha-bhaktas* are rare in this world, and

therefore only a few *śuddha-bhaktas* can be found in any single *iṣṭagoṣṭhī*. Even a gathering of just three Vaiṣṇavas constitutes an *iṣṭagoṣṭhī*. This is described in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya-līlā* 4.52):

*prabhu āsi’ prati-dina milena dui-jane
iṣṭa-goṣṭhī, kṛṣṇa-kathā kahe kata-kṣaṇe*

Every day Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu would come to meet them both (Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara and Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda) and in their *iṣṭagoṣṭhī* they would discuss *kṛṣṇa-kathā* for some time.

A meeting of only two Vaiṣṇavas is called a *kṛṣṇa-kathā-goṣṭhī*. This is stated in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya-līlā* 4.136):

*dui-jana vasi’ kṛṣṇa-kathā-goṣṭhī kailā
paṇḍitere sanātana duḥkha nivedilā*

When Jagadānanda Paṇḍita and Sanātana Gosvāmī sat together for a *kṛṣṇa-kathā-goṣṭhī* to discuss Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes, Sanātana Gosvāmī submitted to Jagadānanda Paṇḍita the cause of his sorrow.

Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja is universal

The purport is that when all types of people congregate in assemblies organized by devotees or faithful people, a general assembly of Gaurāṅga is formed. A congregation consisting solely of devotees is called a Vaiṣṇava assembly, or an *iṣṭagoṣṭhī* of Vaiṣṇavas. When two *śuddha-bhaktas* meet, a *kṛṣṇa-kathā-goṣṭhī* takes place. And when a single *śuddha-bhakta* resides somewhere to exclusively chant the holy name, it is a place of *nirjana-bhajana*, or solitary devotional practice. The people in all these categories are included in Gaurāṅga’s society. It can therefore be concluded that the purpose of Śrī Gaurāṅga’s congregation is to cultivate activities related to the eternal, constitutional occupation of the living entity (*jaiva-dharma*) throughout the universe.

The founding of Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja in Kalikata and an instruction for the society's leaders

By the inspiration of Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu, Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja has been established in the vast city of Kalikata (Kolkata). This is a matter of extreme good fortune for the public. Now it is the responsibility of every noble-hearted, genuine seeker of the Truth to work on promoting and preserving it. This society will not remain undisturbed unless its members vigilantly avoid selfishness, hypocrisy and the desire for honour and prestige.

In the land of Bengal, these three faults pollute whatever grand mission is inaugurated, and consequently that mission is eventually ruined. With folded hands we humbly beg the big-hearted leaders of this society to remain ever conscious of this. If the members of this society can follow all the ancient rules and regulations of *sat-dharma*, or true religion, while remaining unaffected by the three improprieties mentioned above, the society will flourish. Unity alone is the life of any community. The introduction of a new opinion or the divergence of opinion will destroy the unity of its members and eventually ruin the very life of the society. We, however, will perform *kīrtana* of Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu's glories and never be envious of the opinions and activities of the other *sampradāyas*. The most venerable Haridāsa Ṭhākura has said:

*śuna, bāpa, sabārai ekai īśvara
nāma-matra bheda kare hinduye yavane
paramārthe 'eka' kahe korāṇe purāṇe
eka śuddha nitya-vastu akhaṇḍa avyaya
paripūrṇa haiā vaise sabāra hṛdaya
se prabhura nāma-guṇa sakala jagate
balena sakale mātra nija-śāstra mate
ye īśvara, se punaḥ sabāra bhāva laya
himsā karilei se, tāhān himsā haya*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Ādi-khaṇḍa 16.76-8, 80-1)

Dear father, the Supreme Lord is one for all living entities. The difference between the Muslim God and the Hindu God is in name only. All scriptures, whether the Koran or the Purāṇas, state that there is only one Supreme Lord. He is the non-dual, eternal, transcendental Absolute Truth, infallible and perfectly complete, and in that capacity He resides in everyone's heart. The Supreme Lord's transcendental name and qualities are glorified throughout the world by various scriptures. The Lord accepts each

individual's mood of surrender. When you are violent to others, you are being violent to the Lord Himself.

khaṇḍa khaṇḍa hai' deha yāya yadi prāṇa

tabu āmi vadane nā chāḍi hari-nāma

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Ādi-khaṇḍa 16.94)

My body may be cut into pieces or I may lose my life, but I will never abandon uttering the holy name.

Delineating the behaviour of the members of the Vaiṣṇava society

The society of Gaurāṅga is certain to develop if its noble-hearted members adhere to the above guidelines. It is essential that they follow certain time-tested principles. In the general meetings of Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja,^{v4} recitations, explanations, scriptural discourses and *nāma-saṅkīrtana* can be performed, but it will be offensive to hold discourses imbued with *rasa* or to sing *rasa-kīrtana* in such assemblies. This can take place only in an *iṣṭagoṣṭhī*. It is essential to observe certain principles, as witnessed in the character of Mahāprabhu:

dīne nṛtya-kīrtana, īśvara-darśana

rātrye rāya-svarūpa-sane rasa-āsvādana

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 11.12)

During the day, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu performed *nṛtya-kīrtana*, dancing and chanting, and He also took *darśana* of Lord Jagannātha. At night, along with Rāya Rāmānanda and Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī, He tasted the nectar of *rasa*.

This implies that there is no pleasure in discussing *rasa* in the association of general people, and that such discussions will substantially impede one from relishing *rasa*. This hindrance does not appear in an *iṣṭagoṣṭhī*.

It is necessary to preserve the etiquette of *kīrtana* when *nāma-kīrtana* is performed. In this regard it is also necessary to decide what is most effective. If the members of the Vaiṣṇava society themselves perform *kīrtana*, that *kīrtana* will bear the most fruit. Listening to the *kīrtana* of hired musicians who perform for remuneration is both offensive and fruitless.

Caution to preachers regarding their qualification

It is vital that Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja exercises great care in its preaching. Discourses and instructions should be strictly in accordance with the teachings Śrī Gaurācandra, bestowed upon the *jīvas* of Kali-yuga out of His boundless compassion.

The responsibility to preach is best given to the members of the *bhajana* section. Mere eloquence cannot make one a preacher of Śrī Gaurāṅga's teachings. If some young, learned great souls attend *iṣṭagoṣṭhīs* of the *bhajana* section and therein discuss in a simple-hearted way the teachings of Śrī Gaurāṅga, they will quickly become adept preachers.

If the society of Gaurāṅga consists of preachers who do not have the understanding that the Lord's name (*nāma*) and the Lord Himself (*nāmī*) are non-different, and if they do not have faith that this non-different reality is the Supreme Absolute Truth, *parama brahma-tattva*, they will not confer any welfare to others. Rather, their preaching will only have a negative effect. This is most vital. The only qualified preachers are those who have acquired knowledge about the intrinsic nature of *śuddha-bhakti*, and who relish *nāma-rasa*, the nectar of the holy name, being completely free from offences.

It is essential for all preachers to be fully acquainted with *nāma-aparādha*, offences to the holy name of the Lord. Those who are aware of these offences are qualified to preach the glories of the holy name. In disseminating the glories of the holy name, one must also give instructions about the necessity of consciously avoiding *nāma-aparādha*. Preachers who do not do so will themselves become offenders to the holy name.

The genuine society of Gaurāṅga is the society that includes from its inception *viśuddha-vaiṣṇavas*, or devotees on the transcendental platform

Previously, we explained that a society of Śrī Gaurāṅga that does not accommodate all types of *Vaiṣṇavas* will be short lived. That said, the fact is that a society founded with *viśuddha-vaiṣṇavas*, or pure devotees on the transcendental platform, as members is to be regarded as the true Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja. Among the various *Vaiṣṇavas* in such a congregation, the *viśuddha-vaiṣṇavas* are immersed in the bliss of *bhajana*, and are mostly inactive in developing their worldly life. Until those who have an inclination for *bhajana* become specifically immersed in the bliss of *bhajana* they can engage in activities to advance their worldly life. However, if they do not get the association of *Vaiṣṇavas* who are immersed in the bliss of *bhajana*, they will become completely materialistic within no time. For such people, it is nothing but self-deception to establish and promote themselves as representing the society of Śrī Gaurāṅga, without associating with *śuddha-vaiṣṇavas*.

Progress in bhajana is not possible without the association of an elevated Vaiṣṇava

One may certainly be engaged in spreading the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya while living with extremely materialistic people. But without having the association of Vaiṣṇavas who are deeply absorbed in the bliss of *bhajana*, one's life will go in vain and gradually one may fall down. Those in the society of Gaurāṅga may see this happening to certain members. However, if they still do not seek the association of those devotees who are deeply absorbed in the bliss of *bhajana* and include them within their society, what will become of their society? We cannot say.

The preachers of bhakti-dharma always reject the policy of conciliation, which is opposed to the teachings of Śrī Gaurāṅga

Nowadays it is seen that the members of Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja are not performing any special activities beyond celebrating the festival of Mahāprabhu's appearance. It does not seem that by holding assemblies in the homes of two or three materialistic people anything significant will be accomplished. If they simply try to satisfy the materialists, *anarthas* will gradually arise in them. By agreeing with the opinion of materialistic people they will continue to float on the unending wave of impersonalism.

To propagate *bhakti* to Śrī Gaurāṅga, it is essential that in taking the help of materialistic people, one is not obliged to agree with their understanding. To accept conceptions that oppose the teachings of Śrī Gaurāṅga in order to satisfy the minds of materialistic people is utterly inappropriate. Respect all beings in this world. Try to remove the suffering of every living entity. While living with others, try to act for their welfare. Never forget, however, to follow the supremely ideal character and absolutely essential instructions of Śrī Gaurāṅga. In every city, perform *śrī kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana* and propagate Śrī Gaurāṅga's teachings.

An instruction of benevolence to Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja: Travel and spread the teachings of Śrī Gaurāṅga

O devotees in Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja, go from door to door with the scripture *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* in your hands and spread the name and teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Just as Śrī Mahāprabhu ordered Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrī Haridāsa to travel everywhere and preach, you also become the servant of Śrī Gaurāṅga and go to every country, engaging honest people in circulating Śrī Gaurāṅga's message.

This preaching mission cannot be accomplished by dishonest people. Immediately establish a Vaiṣṇava school for this purpose. Educate some selfless people of good character and give them the responsibility of itinerant preaching in every town and village. Most blessed indeed are they who can do this. Those who do not follow such a formula will simply be imitating the supremely pure character of Śrī Mahāprabhu.

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Raising the Divine Temple of the Bhāgavat

And Unfolding the Ultimate Conception of Parakīya

By Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda

from Śrīla Prabhupādera Harikathāmṛtam

(The Immortal Nectar of Śrīla Prabhupāda's Sermons on Lord Hari)

The vast palace of the Gauḍīya Maṭha has been externally manifest, but now there are several important sacred texts that must also be manifested in this world in order to perfectly establish and preserve the subject matter of internalized pure devotional service to Śrī Hari (*hari-bhajana*). By manifesting the temple¹ made of both *grantha-bhāgavat*, the sacred texts related to Bhāgavan, and *bhakta-bhāgavat*, the devoted worshippers of Bhāgavan who constantly sing His divine glories, the transcendent topics about Śrī Hari will be propagated throughout the world for far longer than by manifesting temples of marble and brick.

A person's lifelong accrue-ment of assets has been engaged in establishing a place of refuge, a fort from which to preach the message of the Supreme Lord. Yet one taking shelter there must still protect himself from the fellowship of ungodly folk. That is to say, he must save himself from the chaotic sway of this degraded age and preach the message of Godhead from his own station. Consequently there is a need to disseminate many more sacred texts. The topic of devotional service to the Supreme Lord (*bhagavat-bhakti*) will remain in this world if the temple made of these sacred texts and of the ideal lives of His devoted worshippers is manifest.

The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

It is essential that a genuine elucidation on the Tenth Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* be written. It must not merely be the excess verbosity of scholars who are expert in utterance, nor an exhibition of *prākṛtā-sahajiyās*, the capricious imitationists who accept their cheaply conceived fantasies as part of absolute reality. Rather, for those who earnestly thirst to serve Transcendent Beauty, and in whom ardent spiritual greed for such service has arisen, this commentary will be considered most desirable to read.

There is no treatise in existence that compares to the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Its narrations are not mythology. One who makes a truly impartial study will realize that a sacred text like the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* has never been excelled, nor can it ever be. Within the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, progressively evolved conceptions of the Absolute are demonstrated in sequence. The preliminary conception is doubtfulness of the existence of any supreme truth (*saṁśaya*). Then come denial of the personal Absolute (*nāstikya*), acceptance of the Absolute as impersonal and featureless (*nirguṇa*), the theory that God exists but is neuter (*klīva*), the potent Godhead (*puruṣa*) and then the Potent and His Potency (*mithuna*). The conception next evolves to *svakīya*, the eternal matrimony of the Supreme Male and His consort, and finally *parakīya*, the paramour conception of the Divine Couple.

This final theme, *kṛṣṇa-līlā*, appears in the Tenth Canto, so what was the necessity of composing the previous nine cantos? In these, a foundation is made in preparation for introducing the absolutely autocratic loving affairs of the supremely independent Śrī Kṛṣṇa. These loving affairs are the paramount subject of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The first nine cantos present the rudimentary theories of doubt up to the conception of conjugal love of God, and in the Tenth Canto, in chapters like *Gopī-gīta*, the paramour conception is revealed.

Prior to the appearance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, many may have examined the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, but only those who have read the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* after reading His biographical anthology *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* – which was compiled by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's foremost adherent, Śrīla Kavirāja Gosvāmī – and have made their study of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* while remaining inside its shelter, take to heart its real purpose and explicit theme.

Professional orators and *prākṛtā-sahajiyās* conceal the divinely intended method of narrating the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* must be expressed in virtue of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and in line with the path of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. The genuine commentary of the Tenth Canto shall not be written so as to conceal this method. Countless *sahajiyās* have delivered such commentaries simply for the gratification of general people. Thus they have cleared a path to hell for themselves and others.

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the fully matured, succulent fruit of the wish-fulfilling Vedas – the source of aggregate knowledge and wisdom.

*nigama-kalpa-taror galitaṁ phalaṁ
śuka-mukhād amṛta-drava-saṁyutam
pibata bhāgavataṁ rasam ālayaṁ
muhur aho rasikā bhuvi bhāvukāḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.1.3)

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the mature, succulent fruit of the wish-fulfilling tree of Vedic literatures. It emanated from the lips of Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī and, through the disciplic succession of bona fide *gurus*, it has willingly descended upon this earth in its entirety. It is saturated with the supremely pleasing ambrosial nectar of transcendental emotion (*rasa*). Having no skin, hard seed, fibres or other discardable parts, it is fit for drinking because it is completely liquid. O great devotees – you who are *bhāvuka*, well acquainted with the transcendental nectarean emotions of divine love, and who are *rasika*, expert in relishing all the specific forms of the liquefied, ambrosia of transcendental emotion – even in the liberated stage, you should repeatedly drink the sweet nectar of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Indeed, the supremely liberated souls perpetually relish the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

The word “*nigama*” is synonymous with the word “Veda”. The Vedas are likened to a wish-fulfilling tree. Whatever one may aspire for with resolve, the Vedas easily yield the fruit. Seculars resolve to pursue the ordinary fourfold Vedic goals, namely, *dharma* (mundane religiosity and righteousness), followed by *artha* (resultant prosperity), *kāma* (sensual exploit of the facilities afforded by prosperity), and at last *mokṣa* (the absolute cessation of consequent material sufferings). On the other hand, those who have abandoned sensual exploit (*bhukti*) as well as the pursuit of emancipation from suffering (*mukti*) and who have factually crossed beyond the realm of corporeal perception never aspire for these unpalatable or tasteless things. The fruitive workers (*karmīs*), who are full of selfish motives, crave that which is distorted and repugnant, while the adherents of monism (*jñānīs*) try to realize dry and tasteless absolute non-distinction. But the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* will never yield repugnant or tasteless fruit.

Within the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* the increasing excellence of the intrinsic love between the Supreme Lord (*viśaya*, or *sevya*) and His servitors (*āśraya*, or *sevaka*) is readily traced through each of the successive stages from contracted (*saṅkucita*); to slightly budding (*īṣat-mukulita*); developing, or flowering (*puṣpita*); expanding, or blooming (*vardhita*); mature, or fully developed (*paripuṣṭa*); and finally profusely exuberant, or perfected (*prapakva*).^{v2}

Similarly, as the wish-fulfilling tree of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* unfolds, all conceptions of the Supreme Absolute are chronicled as they evolve through

doubt, the denial of the absolute, the impersonal absolute, the personal but impotent God, the Potent, the Potent with His Potency, the conception of conjugal love with the Supreme, and finally the superlative conception of *parakīya*, the Supreme as paramour. For one who anxiously longs to serve Transcendent Beauty through the *parakīya* conception, there is no entity that can award the fruit of their determined endeavour other than the wish-fulfilling tree of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Throughout all the material universes, or beyond them, or across the Virajā in Brahmaloka (the endless incorporeal firmament), or even in any of the innumerable Vaikuṇṭha planets, there is no entity besides the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that is capable of yielding the desired fruit of such aspirations.

In considering the *parakīya* conception, four gradations of increasing excellence are observed. Initially it is overly tender and immature (*taruṇa*). Gradually it becomes astringent (*kaṣaya*), then ripe (*pakva*), and finally fully ripened (*prapakva*).^{vii}³ These gradations can be perceived by the topmost devotees who earnestly long to serve Transcendent Beauty. That is to say, it can be perceived by the *rasika* and *bhāvuka bhaktas* as they relish the transcendental nectar of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Only they are factually *bhāvuka* who are situated on the platform of full, uninterrupted realization of their *sthayī-bhāva*, their eternal relationship with Divinity rooted in their own particular mode of service. Apart from one's *sthayī-bhāva*, there are four other ingredients of pure transcendent love.^{viii}⁴ When these four ingredients of love are integrated with the realization of *sthayī-bhāva*, then *rasa*, the transcendent nectar of divine loving exchange, will arise.

Those who are immersed in *rasa* completely surpass the realm of mundane perceptions. Situated on the platform of the profuse transcendental astonishment within their hearts, which are resplendent with *visuddha-sattva* (the supreme purity of spiritual existence), they forever relish this sublime *rasa*.

Only they who are *rasika* (who can relish the astonishing humours of transcendence) can taste the nectar of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the perfectly succulent fruit of the wish-fulfilling tree of Vedic literature.

Upon swallowing any other fruit, there is a possibility of choking, but because this perfectly ripened fruit is fully melted nectar, it contains only juice and is always easy to drink. It has no coarse outer covering, no hard core, and no interfering network of fibres. Indeed, there is no aspect at all to be discarded. Literatures that are tainted by selfish motives (*anyābhilāṣa*), expectation of material gain (*karma*), cultivation of secular knowledge (*jñāna*), or pursuit of mystic power (*yoga*) and even those literatures that expound a form of devotion to God that is mixed with any of these (*miśra-bhakti*) are all entangled with rejectable nonessential matters and are covered by a coarse layer of misconception. Unlike these, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the supremely pure and perfectly ripened embodiment of transcendent nectarean *rasa*. Indeed, it is the infinite reservoir of the absolute totality of

this *rasa*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. Such divine *rasa* is meant to be relished through all stages. Even after the point of liberation the class of truly free souls eternally take pleasure in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

The narration of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* should be heard from the mouths of the *paramahansa* Vaiṣṇavas, the most precious jewels among liberated souls (*muktakula-śiromaṇi*). Still, the *prākṛta-sahajiyās* hear from orators whose hearts are full of innumerable worthless attachments (*anarthas*) that they are dedicated to protecting. Such orators are simply obsessed with the flavours of mundane literature, poetry, and syllables. On the pretence of hearing the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the *prākṛta-sahajiyās* simply seek the meagre gratification of their material senses mistaking *ku-rasa*, the unpalatable flavours of the mundane realm, to be actual *rasa*. Such imitators can never taste the pure, succulent transcendental humours of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

By hearing the explanations of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* sung by a liberated *paramahansa* like Śukadeva Gosvāmī, a qualified listener like Parīkṣit Mahārāja, who was fully convinced regarding the temporary nature of human life,⁵ will at once become immersed in relishing the nectar of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and remain there forever. Thereafter, such a qualified listener forgets all his prior lower interests that were unrelated to Kṛṣṇa and becomes completely untouched by any worldly attachment.

A precise, written explanation of the Tenth Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* grounded in profound and thorough deliberation is indispensable. Indeed, such a composition, arranged in congruence with the *rūpānuga-gauḍīya* conception (the conception of Śrī Caitanyadeva's most distinguished apostles headed by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī), elucidating the Tenth Canto's chapters such as *Rāsa-paścādhāya*, *Bhramara-gīta*, and *Gopī-gīta*, must be set forth without fail. The world is in want of actual beauty or *rūpa*, the conceptions propounded by Śrī Rūpa, for currently only *ku-rūpa* abounds, misshapen conceptions that are opposed to his. In order to broadcast their cleverness and prematurely profess their own elevated status, the *sahajiyās* recklessly amuse themselves by dallying with these lofty branches of the Tenth Canto. Abolishing their misguided interpretations is requisite, as is composing the actual commentaries on *Brhamara-gīta*, *Gopī-gīta* and the rest.

Negation is not Enough

Until now we have simply occupied ourselves in the process of negation, rejecting *atat* (literally, "that which is not"). For eight years our periodical, *Gauḍīya*, has extensively discussed such issues. The *sahajiyās* can be greatly benefited by studying these articles. However, it is not possible to become advanced in the subject matter of *hari-bhajana* if we limit the scope of our endeavours either to simply negating *atat* or to performing favour-able action.

The *sahajiyā-sampradāya* asserts, “We will not abandon offences to chanting the holy names of God.”

We say, “We shall chant the holy names of God without committing such offences as they do.”

The latter indicates no more than the pursuance of favourable action; it does not declare the direct means of performing *hari-bhajana*. Simply being obliged to favourable action is insufficient without liberally engaging in cultivating the uninterrupted performance of pure spiritual service that is fully abiding in, conscientious of, and devoted to the pleasure and welfare of Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-anuśīlanam*).

Just like an epileptic who suffers from recurring seizures, in the absence of such sturdy and uninterrupted service, favourable action alone will not prevent the pilgrim on the path of *bhakti* from periodically losing his healthy spiritual consciousness and falling down. Aided by favourable action alone, he may at once stumble on any unfavourable elements appearing in his path or he may become staggered by consuming the poison of untrue conceptions, mistaking it for ambrosia.

While the benefit of singly performing favourable actions that are related to *bhakti* is not lost even after unlimited lifetimes, still, in this very lifetime, those actions will grant neither emancipation from the mortal sphere, nor the perfection of the soul, nor the ability to perform real *hari-bhajana*. The attainment of Kṛṣṇa will remain completely out of reach for one who does not become captivated by His graceful, beautiful form and qualities. But those who have developed real greed for *rūpa*, Graceful Beauty, who are longing to serve Graceful Beauty, they alone gain intimacy with Kṛṣṇa.

Searching for Graceful Beauty

The name “Śrī Rūpa” is what is understood by the word *rūpa*, or “Graceful Beauty”. Only they who long to serve Graceful Beauty know the meaning of *hari-bhajana*. They completely depend on the guidance of Śrī Rūpa and place all their hopes in following him. The lotus feet of Śrī Rūpa Maṣjarī are their sole object of adoration and service, and eternally remaining at her lotus feet is the only perfection for which they yearn. It is they who are truly searching for Graceful Beauty. The commentary on the Tenth Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* must be fashioned for them.

It is true that we do not approve of the fraudulent interpretations of *Bhramara-gīta* and *Gopī-gīta* propounded by the *sahajiyās*, but then we must also provide the real explanations in place of the condemned ones. Simply rejecting adverse elements by declaring “not this, not this” offers no real assistance. The positive element, “it is this”, must be established. Rejecting adverse elements is but negation in the absence of any positive activity.

The impersonal aspect of the Absolute, which is without any comprehensible features, is designated by the word *tat*, which literally means “that”. Simply

trying to realize *tat* by exhaustively negating all limited matter is not enough. Leaving aside the dry investigation of *tat*, one must enter into the pastimes of *saḥ*, which literally means “He”. He – the Absolute Personality⁶, the infinite reservoir and original perfection of all transcendent features. One must enter into His pastimes, by sequentially realizing the true and absolute nature of His name, His form, His qualities, and the unique glories of His intimate associates.

Those who limit their vision to *tat* and simply engage in the process of negating the unfavourable are bound to make material phenomena their focus. Then there are those whose vision, they claim, extends to *tat-sat* – the Absolute (*tat*) has transcendental existence (*sat*). But those who are factually situated in transcendence even perceive the material world, the cosmic manifestation of the Supreme Lord, as a reflection of the original immaculate source – the eternal and incorruptible abode of the Absolute Divinity. Thus they see *saḥ*, the non-dual entity, as He who manifests all features in full and who possesses sublime names, forms, qualities, intimate associates, and pastimes. Their vision is *raso-vai-saḥ*, “certainly, He is the divine nectar (*rasa*).” He is the absolute form of all sublime nectarean humours in their entirety. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī explains:

akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrtiḥ

prasṁmara-ruci-ruddha-tārakā-pāliḥ

kalita-śyāmā-lalito

rādhā-preyān vidhur jayati

Bhaktirasāmṛta-sindhu (1.1.1)

Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra is supremely glorious! He is the condensed form of all the eternal, supra-mundane *rasas*. Indeed, He has not neglected the full expression of any divine sentiment. Just see how He subjugates the extremely submissive *gopī* Tāraka, just as the vernal full moon outshines a tiny star – her own effulgence totally engulfed by His brilliance. And Pāli, who is also controlled by Him, is just like a constellation keeping the moon at her bosom. His rays overpower her as well. When the vernal full moon accepts the night sky as a playground, the atmosphere becomes ideal for love dalliance. In the same way, Śrī Kṛṣṇa makes Śyāmā, who is like the dark blue vault, and Lalitā, who is love dalliance personified, His very own. He comes under the control of the *prema* of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, who is the embodiment of *mahābhāva* and the origin of all the *yūtheśvarīs*, just as the full moon comes under the powerful influence of the Rādhā-constellation in the spring season. Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s love completely eclipses and defeats Him. She is His everything, without which He is just the lonely moon.

The school of the selfishly motivated *karmīs* and *jñānīs* question:

“Why don’t you manufacture salt? Why don’t you work as weavers or plough the fields? Why don’t you serve people suffering from cholera by becoming their sweepers? Or why don’t you cremate the bodies of the deceased?”

Hoping to perfect their favoured means of increasing sensual and mental pleasure, they somehow attempt to subjugate the devotees of Kṛṣṇa for their purposes. Of course, their cleverness is insignificant compared to the brilliance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's servants, so there is no possibility that they can ever oppress us. Śrī Gaurasundara, Śrī Rādhā-Govinda and all Their intimate associates are superlatively worthy masters. As their loving servants, we have placed them all on our shoulders in respectful subservience, and we will never allow anyone else a place there.

The Pinnacle of All Our Expectations

We will follow *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*, the essential ambrosial commandments propounded by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. We will abandon what is unfavourable and accept what is favourable, but we will never consider the practice of accepting what is favourable to be enough to maintain the progressive flow of our *bhakti*. We will not become degraded, losing our healthy spiritual consciousness like the epileptic who, tortured by recurring seizures, violently falls to the ground unconscious.

Filled with intense enthusiasm, we will actively cultivate the tendencies of our minds, bodies, and words in the service of Kṛṣṇa's name and character (*kṛṣṇa-anuśīlana*), situate ourselves in Mathurā and Vraja – the fully transcendental facsimiles of Kṛṣṇa's unmanifest eternal abodes – and sing the glorification of His holy name and sublime nature. Thus we will follow the clear path set forth by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. Then we will be able to engage in *smaraṇa* (the act of meditating on Kṛṣṇa and thus remembering Him constantly).

We will attain permanent residence on the bank of Rādhā-kuṇḍa in the beautiful forest grove belonging to our most worshipful Goddess. Remaining there forever, we will engage in service to the Divine Couple under the direction of our eternal guides, whose hearts are the permanent resting place of love for Kṛṣṇa (*āśraya*). Outwardly we will never leave the shelter of Kṛṣṇa's holy name, and internally, enveloped in spiritual time – the eternal eightfold divisions of the day (*aṣṭa-kāla*) – we will serve the most cherished beloved of King Vṛṣabhānu's daughter. That is, we will serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the most beloved of Rādhārāṇī, for all time. This achievement is the pinnacle of all our expectations. We have no aspiration besides this. Furthermore, we cannot conceive that any higher aspiration exists even for greatly liberated souls.

The Compassionate Gift of Śrī Caitanya

In truth, our divine guide (Śrī Guru), who is the beloved servant of Kṛṣṇa; the holy name of Kṛṣṇa; the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which unfolds the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa; Śrī Rādhā-Govinda Themselves; and Śrī Caitanya who is known as Śrī Gaurasundara, the combined form of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, are all non-different features of the Absolute Truth. We need not become like the fruitive workers and empiricists, who try to fulfil all their separate interests by the worship of five deities (*paścopāsanā*⁷). Their service is never meant for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa. Instead, we will render truly pleasing service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in five ways to his five non-different features. First we will serve Him in His aspect of His own beloved servant, our divine guide. Second, we will serve Him as His holy name, His incarnation as transcendental sound. Third, we will serve Him as the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Fourth, we will serve Him as Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. And fifth, we will serve Him as Śrī Gaurasundara.

Furthermore, we will worship Kṛṣṇa with all five primary transcendental humours (*paśca-rasa*) – as devotee, servant, friend, guardian and lover. By becoming the devoted follower of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī (*rūpānuga*), we will worship Kṛṣṇa in the paramour conception (*madhura-rasa*), which completely contains all five *rasas*.

We will not be content simply by rejecting the unfavourable, nor will we expect to flourish in *bhakti* simply by accepting the favourable. Rather, we will always actively cultivate the tendency to arrange for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure (*kṛṣṇa-anuśīlana*).

Śrī Caitanyadeva appeared before us as the embodiment of infinite magnanimity, compassion, and kindness (*audārya-vigraha*), for He freely bestowed upon us *unnata-ujjala-rasa*, the most elevated, brilliant conception of devotional service in paramour love, which had not been revealed for millions of aeons.

By immersing ourselves in the endless ocean of His magnanimity we will become the rightful recipients of that same rare treasure. Following in the footsteps of Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara Prabhu, His most confidential companion, we will recite:

heloddhūnita-khedayā viśadayā pronmīlad-āmodayā
śāmyac-chāstra-vivādayā rasa-dayā cittārpitonmādayā
śaśvad-bhakti-vinodayā sa-madayā mādhyura-maryādayā
śrī-caitanya dayā-nidhe tava dayā bhūyād amandodayā

Śrī Caitanya-candrodyā nātaka (8.14) quoted in
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (*Madhya-līlā* 10.119)

O Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, ocean of compassion! May Your auspicious mercy be awakened every-where. It easily dispels all kinds of mundane lamentation, and it illuminates everything with purity. It thoroughly awakens supreme transcendental bliss and removes all confusion arising from disparities among scriptures. Your auspicious mercy bestows all of the transcendental humours headed by paramour love and intoxicates the soul, thus vanquishing his absorption in his mortal frame. In other words, situated in the fully condensed bliss of separation, his heart surges with divine madness and delusion. Your mercy perpetually stimulates *bhakti's* own delightful nature, so that by the influence of the original transcendental Cupid, profuse ecstatic

transformations are aroused that plunder the soul's faculty of discrimination between right and wrong. The appearance of Your mercy heralds the complete cessation of all of the soul's selfish desires and at the same time, it confers the last limit of divine sweetness. Your boundless mercy, in the freedom of unmeasuring love, recklessly distributes the most valuable benediction without any restriction. Please, awaken Your causeless mercy within my heart.

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The Descent of the Holy Name
Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhāra Gosvāmī Mahārāja
Interviewed by Acyutānanda dāsa Brahmācārī

Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhāra Gosvāmī Mahārāja sat on the roof of his quarters in Navadvīpa. The now very old sādhu was in a deeply contemplative mood, and to approach him in this state disturbed me. He motioned that I should sit in front of him, so I timidly went and sat down on a grass mat. There was no one to be seen anywhere. "There are many things to see from up here by which we can remember Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu," His Holiness said, "this Ganges, this forest, the temples, His favourite tree – banana. What do you want?"

"Can you explain, if the Name is a spiritual thing, how are we all chanting it?" I asked, feeling very foolish. After some silence he softly said, "Gaura-haribol, gaura-haribol," and then began:

The Channel of Transcendental Sound

It cannot be uttered by a material tongue, nor can a material ear hear the Name. He is *adhokṣaja*, (beyond experimental knowledge), having reserved the right not to be exposed to organic senses. All the experience, knowledge, and memories that we have are gleaned with the help of mundane senses. Our tongue is comprised mostly of earth and water elements; the nerve endings extending to all parts of the body carry charges of electricity, also a material element. If an object is too far away, it is not touchable, seeable, tastable,

and so forth. If an object is too close, it is also imperceptible; we can't see our own *tilaka* mark or eye make-up.

When the senses are extended by microscopes and telescopes, these instruments have more range, but are still limited to the material sphere. The telescope cannot penetrate the outermost covering of the universe. The microscope lens is composed of atoms and therefore cannot see the atom or anything smaller than the atom.

Similarly, the system of mental speculation is also inefficient when it comes to perceiving the spiritual element. Mind is a material element whose density is very slight. Higher abstractions are no more spiritual than hard rocks. There is a common belief that by extending the potency of the mind we can conceive of the infinite, but this process is defective. If the infinite can be confined in a limited mind, then it is not infinite. I do not even know how many hairs are on my own head. Mental speculators grind their brains over the abstract aphorisms of Zen and the Upaniṣads and think that by their own power they can achieve something like infinity. The result is just mental gratification. The mind explodes and dies of exhaustion. And the reaction is deplorable – total forgetfulness of the self and the infinite.

There are channels by which the infinite descends. He is all power, glory, beauty, knowledge, wealth, and renunciation. He is dominant, all-extending, free, and autocratic. The infinite cannot be contained in a limited sphere but if He is really infinite then He has the power of making Himself known in all His fullness to the finite mind. When, out of His own prerogative, He takes the initiative and reveals Himself to the devotee, there is actual perception of Godhead, self realization, transcendental revelation. By the channel of transcendental sound He comes by vibrating the spiritual tongue of the pure devotees who are representing Him to the world. The spiritual element vibrates the spiritual tongues of the bona fide *guru's* audience, which have hitherto never been vibrated.

Pure Sound is Delivered by the Bona Fide Guru

Sad-gurudeva utters “Hare Kṛṣṇa”. Our material ears hear some sound that resembles the transcendental name of Kṛṣṇa. Our eardrum moves the liquid of the inner ear, half water and half air, which vibrates the ethereal element and touches our mind. At this point, soul is still untouched, and there has been no genuine spiritual experience.

By hearing with the mind's impressions, we enjoy the sound of the cymbals, the beat of the chant, the pleasant company and effect of listening and hearing. But it does not stop here. Piercing the mind, the original sound uttered by *guru* moves our intellect, and we consider the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. For millions of years, sages chanted this on the banks of many holy rivers. Everywhere, a flood of ideas appear about the possible

effects of the *mantra*. This, while being quite blissful, is not spiritual revelation in the true sense.

Beyond the intelligence is the spiritual element – soul, myself. That sound, having cut through all my senses including the mind and intellect, now vibrates the finest sentiments of my own real existence. This is the perception of the holy name on the spiritual plane with my spiritual ear. Then the soul, being inspired, recapitulates, sending the vibration back into the intelligence, mind, and so forth, out to my external tongue and we say, “Hare Kṛṣṇa.” That “Hare Kṛṣṇa” is He. And we dance in ecstasy.

The Creative Power of Sound Vibration

“Sounds, sounds, sounds,” His Holiness repeated slowly.

Sounds – catch hold of the sounds. Seize the sound waves travelling within the ether, and your happiness is assured in spiritual life. One *ṛṣi* has explained in his *sūtra* that massive epidemics are due to the ether being contaminated by impure sound. When the lawyers and pleaders in court begin to tell lies in the name of justice, these sound vibrations contaminate the ether and in turn contaminate the air and water which people breathe and drink, and an epidemic is the result.

When four-headed Brahmā creates the universe, the seed ingredient is sound -- *om̐*. And from that *om̐* the *gāyatrī-mantra* is born. In this sound, the fourteen planetary galaxies sprout like whorls of spiralling stars and planets, with the sun situated in the very centre of the universe. Each planetary system is composed of a different sound uttered by Lord Brahmā. Each galaxy provides the multitudes of *jīvas* with their particular spheres of *karma* (action), *dharma* (religious functions), *artha* (economic development), *kāma* (sensual enjoyment and suffering), and *mokṣa* (emancipation from material existence). It is the function of Brahmā to provide these different galaxies and planets according to the sinful and meritorious deeds of the innumerable living entities.

Lord Brahmā utters a different sound for each planetary system and his engineer, Śrī Viśvakarma, creates the planets according to those sounds. The subtle elements and gross elements are distributed in this way. In our planet, the predominating elements are earth and water. In other worlds, only water is found. On the sun, fire is the prominent element. If a spiritual individual, under the effects of illusion, or *māyā*, wishes to end his gross existence, he may enter a planet of air, ether, mind, or intelligence and live as a ghost.

The individual *jīva* is also endowed with a particle of creative power. And the ordinary individual as well creates his tiny sphere of influence by sound. Some *jīvas*’ spheres of influence are no bigger than their own craniums, and some *jīvas* have influence over a community, a nation, or even a whole

planet. The beauty and harmony of their particular spheres of influence depends on the quality of sound they produce.

When one nation tries to conquer another nation, the first points to capture are the radio stations, the newspapers, the journals – the lines of communication. By sending out its manifesto by sound, the government can remove the former leaders from their posts and capture the country. Then, also by sound, the new government becomes established. If there should be any defect in that sound, then the whole thing is ruined. That is why there is so much alteration in the world situation. The sound of all these *jīvas* is – to quote the Bible – “Babel”. Nonsensical sounds are entering and contaminating the ether, the air, the water, and the very molecular structure of each and every person, place, and thing.

Saṅkalpa and Vikalpa

A person's mind is composed of two functions, technically termed *saṅkalpa* and *vikalpa*. *Saṅkalpa* means the mind's desire to join thoughts into concepts, theories, and tableaux of theories. *Vikalpa* is the mind's function of rejecting thoughts; of simplifying and limiting experiences, which are gathered through the senses of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. Both functions are controlled by sound.

Here is an experiment:

Close your eyes. When I repeat a number, you will see it flash before your mind like it flashes on to a cash register.

One, three, seven, four.

The processes of *saṅkalpa* and *vikalpa* respectively, make the thoughts come and go. This is a very simple form of the mind's process.

On a more complicated scale, there is the very risky business of intentionally invading the sound waves with defective sound. The lines of communication are filled with impure sound from the earliest of schoolbooks to the most advanced so-called philosophy. The White House filibusters^{xii}¹ are another excellent example of intentional pollution of sound channels. If we were to infuse spiritual sound into the ether – saturate the ether with the transcendental sound vibration of “Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare, Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare” – the *mantra* would purify, enlighten, and saturate every being with its potencies.

Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam

In Lord Caitanya's eight verses, which comprise the final message of all spiritual instructions, the first verse gives five effects of the transcendental sound of “Hare Kṛṣṇa,

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare, Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare” as follows:

Ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam. It wipes the material dust from the mirror of our mind. The mind is like the inter-mediate connecting medium between the spirit and that material external covering called the body. The soul has no material activity. When covered by *māyā*, or illusion, the soul remains dormant in a state of suspended animation.

The magnitude of the soul is so great however, that it infuses consciousness on all sides. Through the medium of the mind, the senses act and we ‘know’ things. If this ‘glass’, the mind, is put out of focus by the external nature, we suffer confusion, pain, disease, and death. Yes, death is a state of mind only, as the soul has no death. By the mind we mistakenly think, “Oh, I am dying!” “I am drowning!” “I am giving birth!” “I am sick!” and so forth. When the mind is cleansed by the *mahā-mantra*, it is forcibly purified. All the material concoctions, which are the cause of our suffering, are forcibly murdered, starved to death. They thrive on material sense pleasures. Flooding the mind with transcendental sound is just like stepping on the pin of a bomb. All those misconceptions of material suffering and enjoyment are shattered, murdered, and the material mind is conquered wholly, leaving no enemies behind. The mind then reflects the spiritual knowledge, quality and energy of the soul itself.

Bhava-mahā-dāvāgni-nirvāpaṇam. The fire of conditional life is thus extinguished. *Nirvāṇa*, which most people are trying to understand from Buddhist texts, means extinguishing the fire of material existence. This body has been burning from the very beginning of time by the process of digestion. Biologists all declare that the body is a burning organism, giving off heat, water vapour, and carbon dioxide. After seventy or more years, our body is consumed by that smouldering digestive fire and we move into another body, only to burn up that one too. It is like chain smoking. With the lit end of the cigarette you light up a fresh cigarette, and on and on. By the potency of the transcendental sound, the cause of that fire is extinguished.

Śreyaḥ-kairava-candrikā, vitarāṇaṁ vidyāvadhū-jīvanam. The transcendental sound then spreads the light of benedictions, peaceful suggestions and fearlessness, and no more anxieties invade the mind. When we come out of the womb we approach the world with many deep-rooted fears. Is there safety? Is there happiness? Is there peace? The answer is the basic seed. *Oṁ* in this case means a big ‘yes’. *Oṁ*, ‘yes’ – a positive answer. Simply by negating the mind, the questions of the soul are not satisfied; something positive must be given. The *mahā-mantra* floods the mind with suggestions of the truth.

Ānandāmbudhi-varddhanam, pratipadam pūrṇāmṛtāsvādanam. A full dose -- an ocean of blissful nectar -- is served to the soul, who has been thirsty since time immemorial.

Sarvātma-snapanam, param vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam. This point has a twofold meaning, one external and one internal. *Sarvātma* means ‘all *jīvas*’.

The holy name bathes all souls with spiritual bliss, knowledge and love. The transcendental sound completely overcomes the soul with His sublime potencies. But *ātman* has many meanings, as given by Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Ātman means the Supreme Absolute Truth, the body, the mind, the intelligence, endeavour, conviction, and nature. By uttering the pure sound of the *mahā-mantra* one invades the very cause of everything that exists. The mind, body, and soul, and even nature itself, can be changed into transcendental nature by once exclaiming “Hare Kṛṣṇa”. Capture the sound waves which are the cause of every item of existence and saturate them with “Hare Kṛṣṇa”. The result will be the total transformation of energy. An *āśrama* (temple) and all the paraphernalia in it are all divine. The environment in which we live in the *āśrama* is not the same as the one in which we were born. It is *there*, it is Goloka, and the more we progress in our *sādhana* the more He will reveal Himself to us.

Camouflaging the Guru

“Regarding one of the supreme forces in the descent of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, Jayadeva Gosvāmī, *jagad-guru*, has written a beautiful verse describing this process: “O *harināma*, You enter my ear and touch my heart, and tears flow from my eyes and fall to the ground making soft clay. My footprints are left for my successors to follow my way.”

It must be noted that if the *guru* is bogus, then that name will not touch the spiritual spark within the coverings of mind and body. It may sound the same, but it is not, just as milk and whitewash look the same, but they are altogether different.

Now many such artificial *gurus* are about, and this fact is, as it were, camouflaging the genuine devotees. If someone finds a treasure beneath a tree and marks the tree with his initials and then comes back to find every tree marked with the same initials, he is unable to recall the original tree.

Five Types of Service

The original sentiments invoked by the name are concentrated, blissful recollections of the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. These sentiments are in all souls and are five in number: the neutral sentiment, the serving sentiment, the sentiment of friendship, parental sentiment, and the sentiment of intimate love. Kṛṣṇa is called *akhila-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, the ocean of all transcendental sentiment. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says, “*ye yathā mām prapadyante, tām̐s tathaiva bhajāmy aham* – I reciprocate with all the various services rendered within the sphere of these different sentiments, or *rasas*.”

Kṛṣṇa uses the neutral devotees, who do not take to active engagement in His interest, at His own sweet time and liking. If He wants to play the flute He picks it up and He sets it down when He likes. To His servants, He is the noble master. In this relationship there is more facility to please the master – to bring His food, His favourite clothing – yet there is still some hindrance, since He may tell the servant to be gone, and the servant must obey out of duty.

The friendship *rasa* has two stages. The first stage is friendship with feeling of respect and reverence. Arjuna has this type of friendly relationship with Kṛṣṇa. He begs forgiveness from Kṛṣṇa for unknowingly calling Him in jest or for associating with Him without bowing down, and so forth. When the friendship is more developed, the respect and honourable formalities disappear. Jumping on Kṛṣṇa's shoulders, wrestling and playing as though Kṛṣṇa were their equal, Sudāmā, Śrīdāma, and the other cowherd boys revel in endless sports. Sometimes they even consider Kṛṣṇa their inferior: "Oh, Kṛṣṇa? He is the youngest one of us. He is also the lightest. We can all overcome Him in wrestling, so go lightly with Him."

Just as sugar cane juice is made more concentrated until it becomes molasses and then crystal, the friendly *rasa*, with added feelings, develops into parental affection. "Kṛṣṇa is my son," says Mother Yasodā. "I must always look after His needs and protection. If I don't see Him for even five minutes I get so scared. I see huge trees falling on Him and horrible demons capturing Him. Oh, there You are! Why do You scare Your mother like that? Always stay in my presence. I can not stand to have You out of sight." Even punishment of the beloved is seen in this intimate relationship.

As concentrated sugar becomes rock candy, so the parental exchange of *rasas* condenses into conjugal love in which there is complete dedication to the desires of Kṛṣṇa with no tinge of desire for one's own pleasure. "I am Yours" – complete unconditional surrender. "If You trample my body underfoot or embrace me fondly for Your pleasure I am happy. If You want to throw me into hell and keep me far from Your company I am prepared to go. If You forget me, I cannot forget You; You are always my beloved."

By this time His Holiness had become exhausted. After forty years of lecturing previous to the use of microphones, his voice had become very thin. We were only one inch apart, face to face.

Just then the loud gong began to toll in crescendo, reaching four loud blasts and reverberating into silence.

"Go down now. It is time for āratika. Could you follow my words?"

"Yes," I said.

“Did you like it?”

“Yes.”

“That’s all right. Go down now.”

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Ṭhākura Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda
Glorification of the exalted ācārya on his disappearance day
By Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajṣāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja

The inclination to remember Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in the mode of separation

The *sat-cit-ānanda vastu* is the truly abiding substance composed of pure eternal reality, cognizance and bliss. If *sat-cit-ānanda vastu* remains hidden from our view, from the ordinary people of this plane, we will not be able to conceive of it and it will be beyond our revelation. Indeed, that which remains beyond our vision we describe as being in the unmanifest (*aprakāṣa*) state. But even though unmanifest, the *śuddha-sattva vastu* (the truly abiding substance comprised of pure existence) is never absent in any way. Only when our vision of its absence is itself absent, will we perceive *sādhya-vastu* (the ultimate object of attainment) and describe it as eternal (*nitya*) and primeval (*sanātana*). The *sat-cit-ānanda vastu* is indeed eternal and primeval and there is certainly no better revelation of its meaning than “Saccidānanda Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura”. Although we constantly have all kinds of discussions about him, on this day, feeling separation from Saccidānanda, we have engaged in remembering some of the especially unique features of his pastimes. Such remembrance is a form of service to his lotus feet. Śrīla Ṭhākura concealed himself from ordinary vision on the new moon day of Āṣāḍha thirty-five years ago today.^{xiii}¹

Reflecting upon the transcendental sat-cit-ānanda vastu is only possible through śabda

We are constantly hearing and discussing the following principles:

*prākṛta vastu nahe prākṛta-gocara
veda-purāṇete ei kahe nirantara*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 9.194)

Perception of spiritual objects (*aprākṛta vastu*) is not within the range of the material sense organs and contemplating them is beyond the range of the mind. The Vedas and Purāṇas proclaim this repeatedly.

*kṛṣṇa—sūrya-sama; māyā haya andhakāra
yāhāṇ kṛṣṇa, tāhāṇ nāhi māyāra adhikāra*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 22.31)

Kṛṣṇa is like the sun and *māyā* is darkness. Wherever Kṛṣṇa is present, the influence of *māyā* cannot remain.

Although these statements have become embedded in our minds, we have not realized them in our hearts. There is a process (*sādhana*) by which the *sanātana vastu* (eternal entity) is revealed within the heart. But through the statements just mentioned, we are being warned to first consider carefully the proper methodology of that *sādhana*. One who initiates discussions about Saccidānanda Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura with words or statements made of sound vibrations that have emerged from the material sky is acting in a manner exactly opposite to Śrīla Ṭhākura's teachings. My consciousness will never be capable of revealing Śrīla Ṭhākura's identity through language unless my *idam-jṣāna* (knowledge of this mundane plane) is subdued by *tad-jṣāna* (knowledge of that transcendental plane). Therefore, although it is beneficial for me to remain silent as long as my *idam-jṣāna* dominates, Śrīla Ṭhākura's words, which are full of assurance, are constantly inspiring us to discuss this subject matter. He has made it clear that the divine truth (*aprākṛta-tattva*) can only be deliberated on through *śabda* (words).

The nature of the śabda-tattva referred to by

Śrīla Ṭhākura

In this context, *śabda* must not be taken to mean the words that have their origin in the material sky, nor does it mean the words emanating from the lips, teeth and throats of expert grammarians. It is neither the *śabda* that the empirical scientists define as being produced by periodic waves of compressed air, nor the words of men who simply give credence to philosophers based on popularity. This *śabda* is absolutely beyond the four faults of the senses;^{xiv}² it is eternal (*nitya*), pure (*śuddha*), absolutely complete (*pūrṇa*), liberated (*mukta*), and immortal (*atimartya*). It is the unquestionable source of all knowledge (Veda) and the perfect message received in the succession of bona fide *gurus* (*āmnāya-vānī*). For the purpose of emancipating the *baddha-jīvas* (souls who are conditioned by ignorance), this lineage of the transcendental message (*vānī-paramparā*) awakens within the core of their hearts, which at that time are supremely pure (*viśuddha*). In the hearts of those blessed by destiny, this *vānī* has awakened and enabled them alone to become factually established in all *siddhānta* – the consummate truth. Certainly, the most prominent speciality of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s appearance was manifesting *siddhānta-vānī*.^{xv}³ Thus, he who was *nadīyā-prakāśa*, who revealed the birth place of Mahāprabhu, was also *siddhānta-vānī-prakāśa*, he who manifested *siddhānta-vānī*.

Śrīla Ṭhākura is worshipful because he played the central role in revealing ancient Nadīyā

Śrīla Ṭhākura *mahāśaya* is indeed known as “Nadīyā-prakāśa” for he revealed the actual birth place of Nadīyā-śaśī – the moon of Nadīyā, Śrīman Mahāprabhu – where the Supreme Lord enacted His early pastimes. Therefore, we lovingly serve Nadīyā-prakāśa by establishing and worshipping his deity form. Śrīla Ṭhākura is present in his eternal deity form in *sevya-sevaka-bhāva*.^{xvi}⁴ at Svānanda-sukhada-kuṣja within Śrī Nāma-haṭṭa, the marketplace of the holy name, or the *aprākṛta* Svarūpa-gaṣja. Situated thus, he is reminding us:

muktā api līlayā vighrahaṁ

kṛtvā bhagavantam bhajante

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta
(Madhya-līlā 24.112)

Even liberated souls accept divine forms so they can participate in the transcendental pastimes of Śrī Bhagavān and serve Him.

Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda is the progenitor of Siddhānta-vāṇī

The transcendental message (*vāṇī*) he manifested is the very form of the original goddess of transcendent knowledge – Sarasvatī. That *vāṇī* is indeed Siddhānta-vāṇī or Siddhānta Sarasvatī. By studying the example Śrīla Ṭhākura set in his own life as well as by studying the *granthas* (sacred texts) written by him and the direct continuation of his transcendental message (*vanī-paramparā*), we learn that without taking shelter of the immaculate instructions received through the succession of bona fide *gurus* (*āmnāya-vanī*) or of the irrefutable evidence of Vedic sound-vibration (*śabda-pramāṇa*), we cannot bring delight (*vinoda*) to *sat-cit-ānanda bhakti*. With this in mind, and with the sole aim of worshipping Śrīla Ṭhākura for his satisfaction, we exclusively take shelter of Siddhānta-vāṇī (Siddhānta Sarasvatī) and respectfully offer ourselves to his lotus feet.

*tāte kṛṣṇa bhaje, kare gurura sevana
māyā-jāla chuṭe, pāya kṛṣṇera caraṇa*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 22.25)

Therefore, the entangled *jīvas* should absorb them-selves in *kṛṣṇa-bhajana* and simultaneously do *guru-sevā*. Then only will they be released from the net of *māyā* and finally attain the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Characteristics of some of Śrīla Ṭhākura's relatives and acquaintances

On many occasions I have heard people say that when Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was in the *grhastha āśrama*, they had been his very close relative. They wanted to show that they had been intimate with him and familiar with his identity. Simply hearing this recount, my most venerable *ācāryadeva*, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura would say, “They could not even see him, let alone be near him or know his real identity.” In *Jaiva-dharma*, written by Śrīla Ṭhākura himself, in the Fifteenth Chapter entitled “Prameya – Jīva-tattva (the established proof regarding the living entity)”, we have learned the significance of such statements and the benefit they give when they ultimately bear fruit. Therein we find the following analysis:

“Mind and speech both have their origin in inert matter, and they cannot be made to touch *cit-vastu* (transcendental objects) despite the greatest endeavour. The Vedas declare, ‘*yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha* – Speech and mind return unsuccessful in their attempt to reach *brahma*.’”

Śrīla Ṭhākura warned us continuously: it is impossible to obtain knowledge of transcendental objects through gross and subtle senses. Śrīla Ṭhākura is himself *sat-cit-ānanda bhakti-vinoda* (the *sat-cit-ānanda* form who brings delight to the personification of *bhakti*), so what question is there of him having a material covering? It is completely impossible for the gross body with its external senses or the subtle body to approach him or comprehend his identity and it would defy all logic to claim that they could. He is a *mahāpuruṣa* (a noble and exalted personality) who is *nitya-mukta* (eternally liberated) and *atimartya* (beyond mortality). Mortal living beings who are bound by the illusory material energy are completely unable to form any conception about who he is.

Realizing Śrīla Ṭhākura’s quality of being beyond mortality

The manner in which Śrīla Ṭhākura has demonstrated how to reflect on *jīva-tattva* within the Fifteenth Chapter of *Jaiva-dharma*, makes evident his qualities of *atimartyatā* (immortality) and *sarvajṣātā* (omniscience). He has exposed various irrational arguments for rejecting *cetana-vilāsa* (the blissful activities of spiritual life) based on fear of *jaḍa-vilāsa* (the attempt to enjoy transient matter), which appears to be similar. He has informed us that to bring about true divination of an object, total and pervasive knowledge about it (*vyāpti-jṣāna*), as well as guidance from superior counsel are necessary. In this context one may put forth the argument of “seeing a pearl in an empty oyster shell” and “mistaking a rope for a snake” to establish that the phenomenal world is a total falsity; but these contradict fundamental axioms. From these astonishing insights of Śrīla Ṭhākura, I am realizing his position as the *atimartya ācārya*.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is the Ācārya

Even within the field of traditional philosophical deliberation, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is the *ācārya* in every sense of the word. By virtue of his literary contributions to the field of philosophy, such as his commentaries *Vedānta-bhāṣya*, *Upaniṣad-bhāṣya*, *Sahasranām-bhāṣya*, *Gītā-bhāṣyam*, and so on, it is easily apprehensible to us that without a doubt, he is situated on the most elevated platform within the community of *ācāryas*. Formerly, Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa obliterated the controversy that sprang from the unfounded charge that Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, for lack of a formal commentary, were not authentic adherents of Vedānta. Subsequently, Śrīla Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda arose as the most exalted and noble personality to reform the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava society. And yet, we cannot see the entire manifestation of Śrīla Ṭhākura's contribution because many of his treatises are hitherto unpublished. Therefore, it would be an act of great beneficence upon the entire world for noble-hearted seekers of the truth to endeavour to publish this literature.

Śrīla Saccidānanda Ṭhākura's delineation of true benevolence (paropakāra)

The false concept that the *jīva* is a temporarily covered or reflected form of Bhagavān, and the proposition that real benevolence means to free the *jīva* from *sat-asat-vilakṣaṇa-anirvacanīya*^{vii} and reinstate him as Bhagavān completely differs from the knowledge we have acquired from this most elevated *ācārya*'s teachings about benevolence. The purpose of Śrīla Ṭhākura's commentaries is to establish the *jīvas* on the platform of Absolute Truth by fixing their faith in the reality of their eternal devotional existence. The word *para* (supreme) in *paropakāra* (benevolence) indicates an object's beginningless, natural attribute of being the greatest. Actions that seek to nullify the real greatness of the living entity cannot be called benevolent. That entity who is fully saturated by eternal bliss (*nityānanda*) is truly *para*, and real benevolence to the *jīva* awards him the fruit of becoming fully established in *nityānanda*. What is the use of accepting the existence of *jṣāna* (knowledge) but denying the existence of *jṣāta* (the possessor of knowledge)? How can such conceptions benefit the conscious soul? The living entity is by nature *ānanda-svarūpa* (a form that is inherently made of happiness), but if he becomes spiritually inactive by negating ultimate reality along with his own existence, who will remain to experience that *ānanda* and to whom will benevolence be shown? Śrīla Ṭhākura condemned such so-called benevolence as contemptuous. He did not accept it as benevolence at all because in relation to their conception of *vyavahārika mithyā-vastu*^{viii} (the falseness of commonly experienced reality – the phenomenal world), even their *paramārthika satya-ānanda* (their concept of true happiness as the experience of oneness with the absolute reality – *brahma*) becomes a symbol of falseness and devoid of *ānanda*.

However, the actual principle of mistaking a rope to be a snake has nothing to do with the explanation given by the Māyāvādīs. Snakes and rope are both real, and in order to mistake a rope for a snake, one must have had prior experience of both. In poor light, he mistakes the rope to be a snake because his

mind superimposes his prior impression of a snake on to the rope. Someone who has never actually seen a snake, such as an infant, cannot mistake a rope for a snake. Therefore, it is concluded that there is no possibility of some inexplicable third category like the Māyāvādīs' *sat-asat-anirvacanīya*, which they use to explain *māyā*.

The achievement of temporary fruit is not the goal of benevolence

If the result of an action is undoubtedly seen to have a non-permanent nature, then seeking opportunities to engage in it or becoming subservient to it is not in accordance with the explanation of benevolence given by Śrīla Ṭhākura, nor with any of his teachings. In his analysis of the results of action, he has apprised us that only attainment of the Absolute Truth (*tattva-vastu*) bestows the highest limit of *ānanda* in the *svarūpa* (intrinsic nature) of the living entity. Indeed, with the desire to attain that highest limit of *ānanda*, the *jīvas* accept the flickering happiness of gross and subtle material nature as the *prayojana* (the ultimate goal of life). Such temporariness is never included in the conception of benevolence taught by Śrīla Ṭhākura. The fruit of this so-called benevolence gradually dwindles until it becomes so weak that it can no longer be detected. It withers away to such an extent that it is at last destroyed, and one sorrowfully realizes that it was completely insignificant.

Attainment of prayojana essentially depends on mercy, not on one's own sādhana

The process that leads one to finally obtain the ultimate goal (*prayojana*) – as conceived by Śrīla Ṭhākura – successively bestows both the ability to perform *sādhana* and later the *sādhya* itself.^{xix}7 Certainly, by definition, the word *sādhya* means “that which can be attained through performing *sādhana* and is thus dependent on *sādhana*”. Nevertheless, by hearing the teachings of Śrīla Ṭhākura on *sādhya-vastu* (the final object of attainment) from the mouth of Siddhānta-vāṇī, we can understand that the *sādhya-vastu* is, in reality, beyond the reach of *sādhana*. Thus, attainment of *sādhya* is actually dependent on the mercy of the Absolute Truth (*tattva-vastu*). Moreover, the imperfections of language are bound to interfere while expressing the definition of the word *sādhya*.^x8 It is concluded that, in all respects, *sādhya* manifests through *ārādhana* – loving worship. It is stated in Vedānta-sūtra (3.2.24) “*api samrādhane pratyakṣānumānābhyām* – In all respects, it is by the power of subservience to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī that the living entities become established on the platform of *viśuddha-sattva* and thus behold the Absolute Truth. That Absolute Truth becomes directly visible before them (*pratyakṣa*) and is the basis and substance of all their thoughts (*anumāna*).” In other words, the *tattva-vastu* becomes the object of their *anuśīlana* (the cultivation of constant endeavours to serve), as well as the object of their constant meditation (*dhyāna*).^{xi}9 In the absence of perfect *ārādhana*, or *śuddha-bhakti*, the conscious

being, due to misuse of his free will, finds himself in the presence of mundane perception and false knowledge.

Anuśīlana of the tattva-vastu is in fact abhidheya (the procedures of devotional service)

From the *Vedānta-sūtra* (3.2.26) “*prakāśaś ca karmaṇy abhyāsāt*”, we can learn the actual conception of *anuśīlana* (the cultivation of constant endeavours to serve Bhagavān). This *anuśīlana* is completely different from fruitive work (*karma*) or regular studies (*abhyāsa*); rather this *sūtra* is a *mantra*^{xxii10} that dispels the misconception that merely accumulating knowledge is the means to attain the desired goal. In a practical sense, one cannot attain one’s desired fruit simply by gaining proficient knowledge about a particular subject matter. The only means to obtain it is to engage in *anuśīlana* with great earnestness. In the same way, mere knowledge cannot actually bring us within direct proximity of the *tattva-vastu*. The *tattva-vastu* will manifest to us only after we properly engage in its *anuśīlana* again and again. Therefore, the meaning of *prakāśaś ca* in this *sūtra* is “manifestation of the *tattva-vastu*”, and the meaning of *karmaṇyabhyāsāt*^{xxiii11} is “the result that can be attained by engaging in *anuśīlana* again and again”. In every *grantha* by Śrīla Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, we will discover this truth by deliberating on the chapters in which *abhidheya* is discussed.

Śrīla Ṭhākura appeared in Vīranagara

Rather than attempting to speak something about Śrīla Ṭhākura Saccidānanda independently, we should take shelter of Siddhānta-vāṇī. Only then will we be able to truly know him completely. What *jagad-guru* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Prabhupāda has revealed to us in his introduction to *Jaiva-dharma* is the sole essence of what we should learn about Śrīla Ṭhākura. There, he revealed that the place of appearance of *caitanya-vastu* (Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu) and *advaita-vastu* (Śrī Advaita Ācārya) is also the very place of appearance of *sat-cit-ānanda-vastu* (Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura). Such amazing oneness saturated with speciality is always observed in *ātma-tattva* (spiritual reality). Furthermore, he manifested his pastime of appearing to the world in the place called Vīranagara (in Gauḍadeśa). This is fitting, for it is impossible for *ātma-tattva* to manifest anywhere that lacks spiritual strength (*bala*).^{xxiv12}

All dualities converge in perfect harmony within the aprākṛta-tattva alone

Despite my desire to become purified by discussing many more topics about Śrīla Ṭhākura, I fear my doing so will make this article too lengthy. I have thus concluded here by briefly mentioning his appearance, even though it is the day of his disappearance. Such a contradiction may seem inconsistent from the ordinary perspective, but considering the third *sūtra* of Śrīla Ṭhākura's *grantha*, *Tattva-sūtra*, "*viruddhadharmaṁ tasmin na citram* - The existence of contradicting attributes in the Supreme Absolute Truth is in no way astonishing, for it is entirely natural in Him," we come to know that in the *aprākṛta* (supra-mundane) *sat-cit-ānanda-vastu* the beautiful harmony of all contrary attributes is eternally present. Apart from this, the appearance and disappearance of the *mahājanas* both serve the same purpose. Therefore, the disappearance day - the day of separation - is also a day of celebration. This *amāvasyā* is indeed a most auspicious *tithi* (lunar day), for it has granted the illumination of great auspiciousness.^{xxv13}

namo bhaktivinodāya sac-cid-ānanda-nāmine

gaura-śakti-svarūpāya rūpānuga-varāya te

I offer my *praṇāma* unto Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, the exalted personality who brings delight to Bhakti-devī (Bhakti-vinoda) and who is known by the name Saccidānanda because he is the embodiment of pure eternal reality, cognizance and bliss. He is the personification of Śrī Gaura's internal potency, Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita, and he is the foremost *rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇava.

Translated from *Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā*, Year 1, Issue
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Karuṇaya-avatīrṇaḥ kalau Part 2

The Most Compassionate Avatāra

by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja

The Perversion of Varṇāśrama

In *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* (4.13) the Supreme Personality of Godhead said:

cātur-varṇyaṁ mayā sṛṣṭam

guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśaḥ

I created the four social orders based on the divisions of *guṇa* (qualities as influenced by the modes of nature) and *karma* (the subsequent proclivity for work).

Anything created by Him cannot be destroyed. For this reason, in this age of Kali, all four social divisions (*varṇas*) – *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* and *śūdra*, which are based on *guṇa* and *karma* – are extant, but there have been alterations to their hue, or certain given aspects.

The system of *varṇāśrama-dharma* as delineated in the scriptures solves, beyond doubt, the problem of birth and death, since its aim is to achieve the favour of Lord Viṣṇu. The currently imperilled system has produced a perversion of these four *varṇas*, or class distinctions, now represented by political diplomats, soldiers, capitalists and the general mass of skilled and unskilled labourers.

Previously, the *brāhmaṇas* competently used their best intelligence to serve their fellow man by solving the problems encountered in human life. Now politicians have taken the position of *brāhmaṇas* and are using their best intelligence to execute plans for their own selfish benefit. The only result for society will be disaster.

The current military system is a perversion of the *kṣatriya* class. It is the duty of the *kṣatriyas* to give the people protection, but they now suck the very blood of the mass of citizens in every state by imposing upon them unbearably heavy taxes for their personal squander.

The present capitalists are a perverted representation of the *vaiśyas*, who customarily accumulated wealth to execute the will of Viṣṇu. But now, amassing vast amounts of wealth for their own sense-gratification, these capitalists are the cause of the many problems that have arisen all over the globe, in the form of selfishly motivated political creeds.

And finally, the simple labourers are the perverted representation of the *śūdra* class. They serve the capitalists, who are exploiting them for their own ends. All the while they groan and resort to politics to force the capitalists to solve the problems related to their work.

Thus, although the *varṇāśrama* system has not been rejected altogether as some would like, the entire system has become perverted and complex due to the human tendency to transgress codes of conduct. Thus a peaceful atmosphere that supports progress in the human form of life has been intentionally jeopardized. The authentic *varṇāśrama-dharma* has been fossilized, and its perverted counterpart is incapable of pleasing the all

pervading Godhead, Śrī Viṣṇu. Consequently, no one can escape the police action of material nature, regardless of how expert he is in manipulating it through material science.

Thus when Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya raised the question of *varṇāśrama-dharma*, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu at once rejected it, saying that in regard to pure devotional service, *varṇāśrama-dharma* has no value.

There is No Hope for Demonic Varṇāśrama-dharma

Out of compassion, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared in this age of Kali – *karuṇaya avatīrṇaḥ kalau*. It therefore follows that His unprecedented gift to humanity is not accessible through *varṇāśrama-dharma*, even if one strictly adheres to it. In this context, we must consider two points.

The first is that in this age of Kali, it is of no use to follow a crumbled *varṇāśrama-dharma* that is *adaiva*, or demonic [in which one's birth determines one's *varṇa*, or social order]. No particular benefit can be derived by reinstating such a shattered and crumbled system. By remaining inclined toward this *adaiva varṇāśrama-dharma* there is no hope of achieving devotion to the Lord (*bhagavad-bhakti*).

The second consideration is that, within the present system of *varṇāśrama-dharma*, there is no benefit even if one meticulously adheres to it. This is because by following it, one's endeavour to serve the lotus feet of Lord Viṣṇu is based on identifying with one's external false ego. Thus the benefit of following it is nowhere close to the gift bestowed by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Indeed, with this understanding, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī addressed Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu as *mahā-vadānyāya*, the most munificent incarnation who bestows *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

The supremely pure *varṇāśrama-dharma*, which complies with the principle that someone's *varṇa* is determined by his *guṇa* and *karma*, not by his birth, is known as *viśuddha deva varṇāśrama-dharma*. For one who abides by its principles, gradually it becomes possible to attain *sādhū-saṅga* (association with saintly persons). The power and influence of this *sādhū-saṅga* alone becomes the means to attain *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

Mahāprabhu's Munificence

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu inquired from Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya about the goal of life (*sādhya*) and the means to achieve it (*sādhana*) with the sole intention of precisely ascertaining the process to attain *kṛṣṇa-prema*. In their discussion, they carefully and systematically analyzed this subject in order to establish that *kṛṣṇa-prema* is the transcendental, inherent *dharma* (occupation) of the *jīva* and that it cannot be accessed by ritualistically following the principles of the scriptures, or by accepting the ordinary conceptions of the common man.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu will bestow His mercy upon the living entities of Kali-yuga to the extent that they are degraded, and to that extent He grants them the topmost gift. As the most munificent incarnation, He has appeared

in this world to do just this. Thus, those who cannot avail the opportunity provided by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's quality of great munificence shall, without doubt, remain deprived forever. The crux of this matter has specifically been delineated by the *mahājanas*, or highly exalted sages. With the intention of teaching it to us, Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatīpāda, has said in *Caitanya-candrāmṛta*, Text 46:

vaścito smi vaścito smi
vaścito smi na samśayaḥ
viśvam gaura-rase magnam
sparśo'pi mama nābhāvat

I have been deprived, I have been deprived, surely I have been deprived! The whole world became immersed in love for Śrī Gaura, but alas! my destiny is such that not a drop of that love has touched me.

Following, and helping others follow, are one and the same

Anarpita-carīm-cirāt – This topmost of all benedictions, which reveals to the *jīva* his transcendental, natural *dharma*, and which can inundate the whole world, has not been bestowed for a long, long time. If we contact it but are unable to understand Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's teachings, or even if we can understand them but do not try to help others understand, then surely we will be deprived of this love for Śrī Gaura. In order to give us a firm and thorough understanding of this subject matter, Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatīpāda used the term *vaścito smi* three times – “I have been deprived, I have been deprived, I have been deprived.”

Following the teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu ourselves and helping others follow them are one and the same. Śrīla Kavirāja Gosvāmī wrote the following about Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura:

āpane ācare keha, nā kare pracāra
pracāra karena keha, nā karena ācāra
‘ācāra’, ‘pracāra’,—nāmera karaha ‘dui’ kārya
tumi—sarva-guru, tumi jagatera ārya

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (*Antya-līlā* 4.102-3)

Some persons behave properly but do not preach the glories of chanting *śrī nāma*, whereas others preach but do not behave according to the principles. In relation to the

holy name, you both behave in an exemplary way (*ācāra*) and preach to others (*pracāra*). You are the *guru* of all, for you are the topmost devotee in this world.

Since *ācāra* (practice) and *pracāra* (preaching) are one and the same, they should be simultaneously and actively cultivated. Those who maintain that spiritual maturity is an essential prerequisite to preaching do not have an admirable conception because preaching is identical to *kīrtana*. *Bhakti* has nine limbs, or nine kinds of practice, and the limb that excels all others is *kīrtana*. It is through this one practice alone – *kīrtana*, or preaching – that all the other limbs attain purity.

Indeed, this was Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's teaching to us. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the most munificent incarnation, imparted the same instruction. He commanded one and all to perform the function of *guru* everywhere. He has apprised us of this order as follows:

*yāre dekha, tāre kaha 'kṛṣṇa'-upadeśa
āmāra ājāya guru haṣā tāra' ei deśa*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 7.128)

My order is to instruct whomever you meet to follow the instructions of Śrī Kṛṣṇa as given in the scriptures, which advise one to worship Him. In this way become *guru* and deliver everyone in this land).

If Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Ṭhākura Prabhupāda had waited for his disciple-preachers to attain perfection before he engaged them in acting for the welfare of others, his system of preaching would have unfolded quite differently. With the aim of revealing the glory of Śrī Gaura's potency, he personally transmitted that potency to ordinary persons, who generally were only fit to perform menial work even by the standards of the material world. By thus engaging them in preaching activities in the form of *hari-kīrtana*, his mission attained success.

His Simple and Pure Message

"Mūkaṁ karoti vācālaṁ – By the mercy of Śrī Guru, even a dumb man can become the greatest orator." We had the opportunity to directly witness this. How can a dumb man become a great orator? If one preaches the pure, unadulterated teachings of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, then and only then is it possible. But the moment we mix His pure teachings with even a few words of our own speculation, it marks our greatest misfortune. This act alone becomes the root cause of our complete destruction.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu did not come to teach anything abstruse that would be difficult for the common people to comprehend. If He had done so,

the statement “*jagat-plāvana* – inundation of the whole world with *prema*” would have no truth.

He is certainly more intelligent than each and every one of us, and He knows how to make the fallen souls of Kali-yuga best understand His high-level teachings. Indeed, His teachings are comprehensible by all. Still, our misfortune prevails. First, we do not accept His teachings. Second, to impress others with our prowess we mix something of our own with them.

This behaviour has been observed in groups like Sahajiyā, Āul, Bāul and Karttā-bhajā. They have inserted untruths into the teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. As a result they have become overcome by mundane inertia and rejected by pure Vaiṣṇavas. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura vigorously strived throughout his life to ensure we understood that their contrived conception of *dharma* is not the *dharma* propounded by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Only the endeavour to spread the teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in a simple manner, while being careful not to manipulate them even slightly, will be our sole *bhajana*. But if a person waits till he becomes perfect before he disseminates those teachings, he will be deprived of the service of preaching. Indeed, he will remain in that immature state throughout his whole life.

Offering Without Love

Even if we fully lack the capacity to understand the pure and simple teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, if we just pass them on, carrying them to the next person like a load-carrying donkey, we will still receive Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s blessings. This is, of course, provided we do not adulterate those teachings with any of our own mental speculations.

If by following His instructions to the slightest degree we attract even His mere glance, which is full of compassion (*kāruṇya*), then we will undoubtedly attain something far superior to the fourfold goals of *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*. It is to be understood that the benevolent benediction of the most compassionate incarnation is the most exalted of all attainments, yet it is achieved even by meagre effort.

In His conversation with Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu informed adherents of the *karma-kāṇḍa*^{xxvi} section of the Vedas who maintain the notion that spirit can be synthesized with matter (*cid-jada-samnyavāda*) that *varṇāśrama-dharma* is ineffective. For their benefit, He then said, “*āge kaha āra* – please speak something more than this.”

Then, inspired by Śrī Mahāprabhu, Rāmānanda Rāya spoke the next highest truth: “*kṛṣṇe karmārpaṇa – sarva-sādhya-sāra* – to offer Śrī Kṛṣṇa the results of one’s action is the essence of all perfection.” Yet offering the results of one’s activities in this way is not the means to attain *kṛṣṇa-prema*. To convey this, Mahāprabhu said, “*eho bāhya, āge kaha āra* – This is external. Please tell me a conception higher than this.”

Offering the results of one's activities to the Lord (*karma-arpaṇa*) dispels one's conception that Śrī Viṣṇu is impersonal, or featureless. One may then have realization that Śrī Bhagavān is a person, but still, the means to achieve *kṛṣṇa-prema* remains far away.

The conception of the Absolute Reality of a person who offers the fruit of his activities in this way may be limited to the understanding that Bhagavān will always accept his offerings. But if someone makes an offering without being inspired by *bhagavat-prema*, he is unable to offer the fruits of his activities in the real sense.

It is not possible to offer one's hard earned money for the service of Śrī Bhagavān if one does not love Him. Without loving Him, one cannot offer anything to Him in the real sense and one's self identity will be external: "I am a donor." Nonetheless, the very words "*karma-arpaṇa* - offering the results of one's activities" will faintly resound in one's ears, making the following impression on the mind of the spiritual practitioner (*sādhaka*): "When I have offered this, the Lord can accept it. If He can accept it, it only follows that He can eat and also give blessings. Certainly, therefore, He could not be devoid of features."

The awakening of this type of understanding invokes a mood (*bhāva*) that can rescue one from the grip of impersonalism and help one become established in a personal conception of Bhagavān. Yet this realization of personalism is somewhat gross and far from the quest for the supra-mundane personal reality (*aprākṛta-saviśeṣa-tattva*) that Śrī Gaurasundara intended to bestow.

Since it is not possible to achieve love of God (*bhagavat-prema*) through this type of *karma-arpaṇa* (offering the results of one's activities) Mahāprabhu also rejected it, labelling it "external". He then requested Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya to elaborate further.

To be continued...

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The Mercy of Śrī Guru and Gauḍīya

(The Thirty-third Year of Gauḍīya)

by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja

Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā includes both āśraya and viṣaya

Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā has entered its thirty-third year. This year the *Patrikā* has auspiciously revealed itself, carrying both *āśraya* and *viṣaya vigrahas* (the abode of love and the object of love in deity forms) in its heart: Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga-Rādhā-vinoda-biharijīu.^{xxvii}¹ Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, the Divine Couple who perform transcendental pastimes, have appeared as Śrī Gaurāṅga, and the purpose of Śrī Guru's existence is to reveal the beauty and grace of service to both these aspects. Śrī Caitanya is never without Śrī Kṛṣṇa; rather Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Caitanya-deva alone is He who imparts actual information about *kṛṣṇa-tattva*, and it is from that *kṛṣṇa-tattva* alone that everything, both manifest and unmanifest, has come into being.

Śrī Gaura and Śrī Kṛṣṇa are both viṣaya-vigraha

Śrī gaurāṅga-tattva and śrī kṛṣṇa-tattva are never subjugated by any phenomenal object (*mayika-vastu*). Rather, material nature (*prakṛti*), time (*kāla*), action (*karma*) and so forth are under Their control. Both these *tattvas* are replete with complete knowledge (*pūrṇa-jṣāna-maya*). They are the embodiment of eternality, cognizance and bliss (*sat-cit-ānanda-maya*) and They are *puruṣottama-tattva*, the Supreme Person. They are the original progenitors, existing before the creation of the material cosmos. Even beyond where the doctrine of cause (Viṣṇu) and effect (creation) end, Śrī Gaura and Śrī Kṛṣṇa are manifest as *nāma* and the highest truth.

It is not possible for material history, which is comprised solely of time, place and circumstance, to encompass Them because They are the Supreme Absolute Reality (*para-tattva*). They are not imaginary people as described by Bāṅkīmacandra.^{xxviii}² Rather, when we consider that Their name (*nāma*) and Their self, the possessor of that name (*nāmī*), are non-different, then we find that Śrī Gaura and Śrī Kṛṣṇa are the supremely worshipful Absolute Truth and the only entity really worth cherishing.

The birth and pastimes of Śrī Bhagavān are transcendental

Although He is unborn and eternal, Śrī Bhagavān appeared at the end of Dvāpara-yuga, and again in the following age of Kali. The descriptions of His appearance simply relate to His manifest pastimes within the mundane realm, although His birth and pastimes are eternally present on the transcendental platform. He is *sva-iccha-maya*, made of His own sweet will – unimpeded and completely independent. Therefore it is only because of His causeless mercy upon the *jīvas* that He manifests Himself in this mundane realm and shows them compassion.

According to what He deems necessary, that all-powerful, omnipresent Bhagavān may be either very close by or very far away from the phenomenal world or from the *jīvas*. He is *akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrti*, the reservoir of the entirety of all eternal, supra-mundane humours. For the souls who focus on Him with one-pointed attention He is *kānta* (the most beloved) as well as *prāṇa-pati* (the lord of our life). For the multitude of mothers and fathers, He is their worshipful Śrī Bāla-gopāla. He is the true friend of the distressed (*dīna-bandhu*) and indeed, of the whole world (*jagat-bandhu*). If the *jīva* cannot become friends with Him, then he must live where the enemies of the Lord reside, accepting powerful villains as his friends; thus he invites terrible calamities. Someone who becomes convinced that any living entity other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa is Bhagavān, and who therefore begins to serve him, will eventually give up his decaying mood of service and himself become the enjoyer of service.

Thus, the misfortune of becoming gripped by material inertia comes upon him as he identifies with his mundane false ego more and more. As a result of his downfall he takes lower and lower births, first as an animal, then as a tree, a plant and ultimately as a stone.

Surrender unto Śrī Guru and Vaiṣṇava is the sole cause of complete auspiciousness.

It is for the very purpose of delivering the souls from this downfall that Śrī Guru, who is supremely compassionate, appears in this world. Because he truly feels pain by seeing the suffering of others (*para-duḥkha-duḥkhī*), it is vital that one surrender to him.

Śrī Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī alone is the original abode of love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*āśraya vigraha*) and Śrī Vārṣabhānavī-dayita dāsa (Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura) is fully sheltered by Her. He and his one-pointed followers appear as Śrī Guru in the pastime of delivering the world. Without their causeless mercy it is not possible for the *jīva* to be delivered from his bound condition and devote himself to the service of the transcendental entity. For this reason, the following statement is emphasized: “*tasmat sarva prayatnen gurumeva prasādayet* – to be delivered from one’s conditioned state and attain service to the transcendental entity, one must please Śrī Guru with his every endeavour”.

Sad-guru is the only real guardian of the *sādhaka* (genuine practitioner of *bhakti*) and the *sevaka* (servant). He is their all in all. Without his transcendental glance of affection and his kind assistance it is not possible to progress even slightly on the path of *sādhana-bhajana*. That is the reason for introducing the statement “*ācāryavana puruṣo veda* – only one who receives *dīkṣā* from the *ācārya* and follows his path can know the Absolute Truth.”

It is extremely difficult for those who are ignorant, faithless and full of doubts to ascertain the truth about the Absolute Reality. Therefore, in their auspicious invocations (*maṅgalācaraṇa*), the *sādhus*, *śāstra* and those in our *guru-varga* remind us: “*hari guru vaiṣṇava tinera smaraṇa, tinera smaraṇe haya vāścita pūraṇa* – by remembering Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇava – all three – all of one’s aspirations are fulfilled.”

The distressed state of the conditioned souls and the means to obtain release from it

By dint of their own misdeeds, conditioned souls undergo the results of their *karma* in the form of repeated birth and death. To the degree that their desire to perform mundane activities increases, their bondage to this cycle also increases.

If by chance one has accumulated *sukṛti* (spiritual merit) in past births by serving Śrī Viṣṇu or a Vaiṣṇava, either knowingly or unknowingly, then he will obtain the bona fide guru’s mercy. By nature, conditioned souls are intoxicated by sense gratification and maintain interests separate from Kṛṣṇa. Thus, they remain intent on serving *karmīs*, *jṣānīs* and *yogīs* and have no inclination to serve Viṣṇu and the Vaiṣṇavas. The sole aspiration of those who are absorbed in household life is to obtain wealth, women and prestige (*kanaka*, *kāmiṇī* and *pratiṣṭhā*). They accept as their instructing spiritual master only someone who helps them fulfil these aspirations, and thus they invoke worldly entanglement filled with material desires.

However, for the welfare of the *jīvas* who possess sufficient spiritual merit, Śrī Bhagavān sends His intimate associates as *mahant-guru* (the great spiritual masters). This is truly the *kṛpā*, or mercy, of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In turn, the *kṛpā* of Śrī Guru is to bestow upon the *jīva* service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The implication is that Śrī Guru plants the tendency to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa within the heart of the *jīva*, in the form of the *bhakti-latā-bīja* (the seed of the creeper of devotion). It is only by the fruit of this service tendency that one attains *śraddhā-bhakti* (devotional service imbued with transcendental faith). This is indeed the simplest path to obtain *bhakti*.

The relationship between Śrī Guru and disciple, and the consequence of being rebellious to Śrī Guru

Anyone who pretentiously serves Śrī Kṛṣṇa while acting independently and rejecting the guidance of his *dīkṣā* and *śikṣā gurus* out of pride and envy will only obtain fruitless toil. Śrī Gurudeva only instructs the supremely confidential matters of *sādhana-bhajana* to those who serve him with profound intimacy (*viśrambha-sevā*). One who sincerely follows these instructions given by Śrī Gurudeva, easily obtains the mercy of Śrī Bhagavān.

If the disciple follows Śrī Gurudeva without duplicity, knowing him to be his best friend and benefactor, and the most worshipful *svarūpa* of Hari, then Śrī Hari becomes pleased with him. Those who have a mood of enjoyment but who falsely maintain the ego that they are a genuine *sevaka*, are actually antagonistic toward the mood of service. They find fault in the orders and instructions of Śrī Guru, claiming them to be unfair and inconsiderate. By this, they clear their own path to hell. One who follows the order of Śrī Guru without any considerations, easily obtains his mercy. But if we disregard the example of Śrīla Īśvara Purīpāda and misuse our independence like Rāmacandra Purī by neglecting the order of the spiritual master and harbouring the desire to find faults with him, we will become degraded and leave the path of *bhajana*.

Ascertaining the qualifications and disqualifications of a guru-sevaka

A *guru-sevaka*, or *guru-dāsa*, is humble, he looks after everybody with love and affection, he is truthful, and he observes purity of conduct. He is intelligent; free from lust, anger, and pride; and he is attached to serving Śrī Guru and Bhagavān with faith and devotion. He is free from disease, he is in control of his senses, and he is compassionate. Only someone who is devoid of false ego, who is not envious or lazy, who has no *mamatā* (sense of ownership) for anything worldly, who performs his spiritual practices with resolute determination, who does not see faults in those who are actually full of good qualities, who is free from the tendency to gossip, and who is inquisitive to know the truth – only he is eligible to be called *guru-dāsa*.

On the other hand, those who are lazy, egoistic, miserly, full of anger, gripped by disease, attached to the objects of the senses, greedy, faultfinders, envious, deceitful, foul-mouthed, malicious to devotees, proud of their learning, propagators of others' faults, sadistic and unwilling to accept Śrī Guru's discipline, remain deprived of Śrī Guru's mercy because

they are unable to receive it. Even one who sceptically relies on the six forms of reasoning is unfit to be *guru-dāsa*. The injunctions and prohibitions related to the services directly performed by the *guru-sevaka*, as well as the same in relation to the words of *guru* and *śāstra*, also need especially careful consideration.

Śrī Guru and his *sevaka* are eternal, therefore the relationship between *guru* and disciple is eternal. One must not consider Śrī Guru to be a mortal being. When the *jīva*'s absorption in the mundane realm is finally destroyed, he realizes his eternal, intrinsic identity (*svarūpa*) as *kṛṣṇa-dāsa*. At that moment he attains perfect understanding of the excellences of *bṛhat-caitanya* (the infinite conscious being) and *aṇu-caitanya* (the infinitesimal conscious being) as well as their distinguishing attributes.

The special virtue of Śrī Guru and Gauḍīya is their service of distributing mahāprasāda

The fourth verse of *Gurvāṣṭakam* composed by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura says, “*catur-vidha-śrī-bhagavat-prasāda svādv-anna-tṛptān hari-bhakta-saṅghān.*” There is a poetic translation of this *aṣṭakam* written in Bengali:

*carvya-cuṣya-lehya-peya-rasamaya,
prasādānna kṛṣṇera ati svādu hoyā
bhakta-āsvādane nija tṛpta royā,
vandi sei gurura caraṇa-kamala*

from the Bengali rendition of Śrī Gurvāṣṭakam
by Śrīmad Bhaktiviveka Bhāratī Gosvāmī Mahārāja

The four kinds of foodstuffs, which are chewed (*carvya*), sucked (*cuṣya*), licked (*lehya*), and drunk (*peya*), are filled with *rasa* (divine nectar). When these foodstuffs are accepted by Śrī Kṛṣṇa and become His *prasāda*, they become exceedingly tasteful. Śrī Guru always becomes satisfied by making the devotees relish such *prasāda*. I adore the lotus feet of such a *guru*.

Through one special elucidation on this verse we learn that “Śrī Gurudeva attains supreme satisfaction by making the multitudes of *hari-bhaktas*, who are completely free from *anarthas*, relish one of the four types of *bhagavad-rasa* – *dāsyā*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya* or *madhura* – according to their own moods of service in their eternally perfected forms (*svarūpa-siddha sevā-bhāva*). Let the lotus feet of such a *guru* be the sole object of our adoration.”^{xxix 3}

Therefore, today we hold the merciful lotus feet of Śrī Guru on our heads and, according to his orders and directions, within our hearts we nourish the hope of distributing many varieties of *mahā-prasāda* from the festival of the *Gauḍīya*, a festival that brings about the meeting of *viṣaya* and *āśraya*.^{xxx4} We do not know how successful we will be in accomplishing the heavy responsibility (*guru-dayitva*) of distributing such *mahā-prasāda*. Still, we maintain great hope and firm faith within our hearts that by the mercy of *sad-guru* a lame man can traverse mountains and a dumb man can become qualified to perform *kṛṣṇa-kīrtana*.

It is an extremely difficult task to distribute this *mahā-prasāda*. *Śrī-mahāprasāda*, Govinda, *śrī-nāma* and the Vaiṣṇavas are all transcendental, but for those who have very few pious credits (*svalpa-puṇyāvāna*) sufficient intelligence to realize this has not arisen. Therefore *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, the “law book” for Vaiṣṇavas (*vaiṣṇava-smṛti*), enjoins that because *smārtas* are absorbed in gross reward seeking activity, they should be deceived by offering them some worldly thing instead of offering them *mahā-prasāda*. *Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā* is actually Vaiṣṇava. Therefore, the other three – *śrī-mahāprasāda*, Govinda and *śrī-nāma* – are all contained within it. By the mercy of *guru* and Vaiṣṇavas we are merely engaged as its distributors; that is indeed our *sevā*.

Śrīmatī Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī and those in Her anugatyā are the cooks of the bhoga

Although time, place and circumstance are not considered when distributing *mahā-prasāda*, it is still prohibited to distribute it to faithless people. Clear proof of this is found in *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* (18.67), “*idaṁ te nātapaskāya* – You should never explain the essence of this *Gītā-śāstra* to anyone whose senses are uncontrolled, who is a non-devotee, who is devoid of a serving mood, or who is envious of Me.”

We do not deserve any credit in the matter of distributing *mahā-prasāda*. The sole credit goes to the one who cooks the *bhoga*^{xxx5}, to the one who offers the *bhoga*, to the enjoyer of that *bhoga*, and to His merciful remnants – *śrī mahā-prasāda*.^{xxx6} Śrī Lakṣmi-priya and Viṣṇu-priya cook *bhoga* for Śrī Gaurāṅga, and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī cooks *bhoga* for Śrī Vinoda-bihārī.

Śrī Rādhikā fulfils Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s *mano ‘bhīṣṭa*, or deepest heart’s desire. The preparations of grains and other ingredients that are cooked by Her are the only preparations Śrī Kṛṣṇa enjoys, and only the *prasāda*, or remnants, He leaves after enjoying them is exceedingly dear to Her and truly cherished by Her. Her friends, Lalitā and the other *sakhīs*, have the full right to Her remnants.^{xxx7} *Śrī-guru-pāda-padma*, who is the best among the followers of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, becomes completely satisfied by causing the *jīvas* to taste

that *mahā-prasāda* in accordance with their respective qualifications in a particular *rasa*.

After Śrī Kṛṣṇa's remnants (*mahā-prasāda*) are tasted by the *bhakta*, they are celebrated by the name *mahā-mahā-prasāda*. These remnants bear unlimited potency. The fully ripened, nectarean fruit of the desire tree of Vedic literatures (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*), emanated from the lips of Śrī Śuka, and when it comes into contact with the lips of those in our *śrī rūpānuga-guru-varga*, it becomes sweeter than the sweetest.^{xxxiv}⁸ We nourish the longing to become so blessed as to be distributors of that eternal, sublime substance – *mahā-mahā-prasāda*.^{xxxv}⁹

Therefore without being in the *anugātya* (shelter and guidance) of Śrīmatī Rādhā Ṭhākuraṇī, who cooks the *bhoga*, as well as in the *anugātya* of Her followers, like Vārsabhānavī-dayita-dāsa (Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura) who is Śrī Rādhikā's Nayana-maṇī-maṣjarī, and he who is celebrated by the name Kṛtiratna (Śrīla Bhakti Prajāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja) who is Vinoda-maṣjarī, we will never become qualified to be a maidservant assisting Her in the service of cooking the *bhoga* and distributing *mahā-prasāda*. This is the indisputable truth. Without *anugātya*, the influence of adverse activities while preparing the *bhoga* will result in a burnt lump of food. This is comparable to the gross fruits of the *smārtas'* activities (*karma*). Such endeavours do not produce the fruits of real *sevā*, they will just invite *sevā-aparādha*.

A hope to obtain service to Śrī Patrikā and an expression of gratitude for those who are serving it

I convey my due respects and gratitude to the readers and subscribers of *Śrī Patrikā*, to those who approve of it, to those who render any type of service to it, and to those who act as instructors and advisors in producing it. Finally, praying for the mercy and blessings of Śrī Śrī Guru Gaurāṅga-Rādhā-vinoda-bihārīju, Śrī Lakṣmī-Varāha-Nṛsimhadeva, Śrī Rādhā-Giridhārī and Śrī Girirājīju, I conclude these statements about the present year of *Śrī Patrikā*.

The Mercy of Śrī Guru and Gauḍīya
 (The Thirty-third Year of Gauḍīya)
 by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja

Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā includes both āśraya and viśaya

Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā has entered its thirty-third year. This year the *Patrikā* has auspiciously revealed itself, carrying both *āśraya* and *viśaya vigrahas* (the abode of love and the object of love in deity forms) in its heart: Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga-Rādhā-vinoda-biharijīu.^{xxxvi}¹ Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, the Divine Couple who perform transcendental pastimes, have appeared as Śrī Gaurāṅga, and the purpose of Śrī Guru's existence is to reveal the beauty and grace of service to both these aspects. Śrī Caitanya is never without Śrī Kṛṣṇa; rather Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Caitanya-deva alone is He who imparts actual information about *kṛṣṇa-tattva*, and it is from that *kṛṣṇa-tattva* alone that everything, both manifest and unmanifest, has come into being.

Śrī Gaura and Śrī Kṛṣṇa are both viśaya-vigraha

Śrī gaurāṅga-tattva and *śrī kṛṣṇa-tattva* are never subjugated by any phenomenal object (*mayika-vastu*). Rather, material nature (*prakṛti*), time (*kāla*), action (*karma*) and so forth are under Their control. Both these *tattvas* are replete with complete knowledge (*pūrṇa-jñāna-maya*). They are the embodiment of eternality, cognizance and bliss (*sat-cit-ānanda-maya*) and They are *puruṣottama-tattva*, the Supreme Person. They are the original progenitors, existing before the creation of the material cosmos. Even beyond where the doctrine of cause (Viṣṇu) and effect (creation) end, Śrī Gaura and Śrī Kṛṣṇa are manifest as *nāma* and the highest truth.

It is not possible for material history, which is comprised solely of time, place and circumstance, to encompass Them because They are the Supreme Absolute Reality (*para-tattva*). They are not imaginary people as described by Baṅkīmacandra.^{xxxvii}² Rather, when we consider that Their name (*nāma*) and Their self, the possessor of that name (*nāmī*), are non-different, then we find that Śrī Gaura and Śrī Kṛṣṇa are the supremely worshipful Absolute Truth and the only entity really worth cherishing.

The birth and pastimes of Śrī Bhagavān are transcendental

Although He is unborn and eternal, Śrī Bhagavān appeared at the end of Dvāpara-yuga, and again in the following age of Kali. The descriptions of His appearance simply relate to His manifest pastimes within the mundane realm, although His birth and pastimes are eternally present on the transcendental platform. He is *sva-iccha-maya*, made of His own sweet will – unimpeded and completely independent. Therefore it is only because of His causeless mercy upon the *jīvas* that He manifests Himself in this mundane realm and shows them compassion.

According to what He deems necessary, that all-powerful, omnipresent Bhagavān may be either very close by or very far away from the phenomenal world or from the *jīvas*. He is *akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrti*, the reservoir of the entirety of all eternal, supra-mundane humours. For the souls who focus on Him with one-pointed attention He is *kānta* (the most beloved) as well as *prāṇa-pati* (the lord of our life). For the multitude of mothers and fathers, He is their worshipful Śrī Bāla-gopāla. He is the true friend of the distressed (*dīna-bandhu*) and indeed, of the whole world (*jagat-bandhu*). If the *jīva* cannot become friends with Him, then he must live where the enemies of the Lord reside, accepting powerful villains as his friends; thus he invites terrible calamities. Someone who becomes convinced that any living entity other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa is Bhagavān, and who therefore begins to serve him, will eventually give up his decaying mood of service and himself become the enjoyer of service.

Thus, the misfortune of becoming gripped by material inertia comes upon him as he identifies with his mundane false ego more and more. As a result of his downfall he takes lower and lower births, first as an animal, then as a tree, a plant and ultimately as a stone.

Surrender unto Śrī Guru and Vaiṣṇava is the sole cause of complete auspiciousness.

It is for the very purpose of delivering the souls from this downfall that Śrī Guru, who is supremely compassionate, appears in this world. Because he truly feels pain by seeing the suffering of others (*para-duḥkha-duḥkhī*), it is vital that one surrender to him.

Śrī Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī alone is the original abode of love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*āśraya vighraha*) and Śrī Vārṣabhānavī-dayita dāsa (Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura) is fully sheltered by Her. He and his one-pointed followers appear as Śrī Guru in the pastime of delivering the world. Without their causeless mercy it is not possible for the *jīva* to be delivered from his bound condition

and devote himself to the service of the transcendental entity. For this reason, the following statement is emphasized: “*tasmat sarva prayatnen gurumeva prasādayet* – to be delivered from one’s conditioned state and attain service to the transcendental entity, one must please Śrī Guru with his every endeavour”.

Sad-guru is the only real guardian of the *sādhaka* (genuine practitioner of *bhakti*) and the *sevaka* (servant). He is their all in all. Without his transcendental glance of affection and his kind assistance it is not possible to progress even slightly on the path of *sādhana-bhajana*. That is the reason for introducing the statement “*ācāryavana puruṣo veda* – only one who receives *dīkṣā* from the *ācārya* and follows his path can know the Absolute Truth.”

It is extremely difficult for those who are ignorant, faithless and full of doubts to ascertain the truth about the Absolute Reality. Therefore, in their auspicious invocations (*maṅgalācaraṇa*), the *sādhus*, *śāstra* and those in our *guru-varga* remind us: “*hari guru vaiṣṇava tinera smaraṇa, tinera smaraṇe haya vāñcita pūraṇa* – by remembering Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇava – all three – all of one’s aspirations are fulfilled.”

The distressed state of the conditioned souls and the means to obtain release from it

By dint of their own misdeeds, conditioned souls undergo the results of their *karma* in the form of repeated birth and death. To the degree that their desire to perform mundane activities increases, their bondage to this cycle also increases.

If by chance one has accumulated *sukṛti* (spiritual merit) in past births by serving Śrī Viṣṇu or a Vaiṣṇava, either knowingly or unknowingly, then he will obtain the bona fide guru’s mercy. By nature, conditioned souls are intoxicated by sense gratification and maintain interests separate from Kṛṣṇa. Thus, they remain intent on serving *karmīs*, *jñānīs* and *yogīs* and have no inclination to serve Viṣṇu and the Vaiṣṇavas. The sole aspiration of those who are absorbed in household life is to obtain wealth, women and prestige (*kanaka*, *kāmiṇī* and *pratiṣṭhā*). They accept as their instructing spiritual master only someone who helps them fulfil these aspirations, and thus they invoke worldly entanglement filled with material desires.

However, for the welfare of the *jīvas* who possess sufficient spiritual merit, Śrī Bhagavān sends His intimate associates as *mahant-guru* (the great spiritual masters). This is truly the *kṛpā*, or mercy, of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In turn, the *kṛpā* of Śrī Guru is to bestow upon the *jīva* service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The implication is that Śrī Guru plants the tendency to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa within the heart of the *jīva*, in the form of the *bhakti-latā-bīja* (the seed of the creeper of devotion). It is only by the fruit of this service tendency that one attains

śraddhā-bhakti (devotional service imbued with transcendental faith). This is indeed the simplest path to obtain *bhakti*.

The relationship between Śrī Guru and disciple, and the consequence of being rebellious to Śrī Guru

Anyone who pretentiously serves Śrī Kṛṣṇa while acting independently and rejecting the guidance of his *dīkṣā* and *śikṣā gurus* out of pride and envy will only obtain fruitless toil. Śrī Gurudeva only instructs the supremely confidential matters of *sādhana-bhajana* to those who serve him with profound intimacy (*viśrambha-sevā*). One who sincerely follows these instructions given by Śrī Gurudeva, easily obtains the mercy of Śrī Bhagavān.

If the disciple follows Śrī Gurudeva without duplicity, knowing him to be his best friend and benefactor, and the most worshipful *svarūpa* of Hari, then Śrī Hari becomes pleased with him. Those who have a mood of enjoyment but who falsely maintain the ego that they are a genuine *sevaka*, are actually antagonistic toward the mood of service. They find fault in the orders and instructions of Śrī Guru, claiming them to be unfair and inconsiderate. By this, they clear their own path to hell. One who follows the order of Śrī Guru without any considerations, easily obtains his mercy. But if we disregard the example of Śrīla Īśvara Purīpāda and misuse our independence like Rāmacandra Purī by neglecting the order of the spiritual master and harbouring the desire to find faults with him, we will become degraded and leave the path of *bhajana*.

Ascertaining the qualifications and disqualifications of a guru-sevaka

A *guru-sevaka*, or *guru-dāsa*, is humble, he looks after everybody with love and affection, he is truthful, and he observes purity of conduct. He is intelligent; free from lust, anger, and pride; and he is attached to serving Śrī Guru and Bhagavān with faith and devotion. He is free from disease, he is in control of his senses, and he is compassionate. Only someone who is devoid of false ego, who is not envious or lazy, who has no *mamatā* (sense of ownership) for anything worldly, who performs his spiritual practices with resolute determination, who does not see faults in those who are actually full of good qualities, who is free from the tendency to gossip, and who is inquisitive to know the truth – only he is eligible to be called *guru-dāsa*.

On the other hand, those who are lazy, egoistic, miserly, full of anger, gripped by disease, attached to the objects of the senses, greedy, faultfinders, envious, deceitful, foul-mouthed, malicious to devotees, proud of their learning, propagators of others' faults, sadistic and unwilling to accept Śrī Guru's discipline, remain deprived of Śrī Guru's mercy because they are unable to receive it. Even one who sceptically relies on the six forms of reasoning is unfit to be *guru-dāsa*. The injunctions and prohibitions related to the services directly performed by the *guru-sevaka*, as well as the same in relation to the words of *guru* and *śāstra*, also need especially careful consideration.

Śrī Guru and his *sevaka* are eternal, therefore the relationship between *guru* and disciple is eternal. One must not consider Śrī Guru to be a mortal being. When the *jīva*'s absorption in the mundane realm is finally destroyed, he realizes his eternal, intrinsic identity (*svarūpa*) as *kṛṣṇa-dāsa*. At that moment he attains perfect understanding of the excellences of *bṛhat-caitanya* (the infinite conscious being) and *aṇu-caitanya* (the infinitesimal conscious being) as well as their distinguishing attributes.

The special virtue of Śrī Guru and Gauḍīya is their service of distributing mahāprasāda

The fourth verse of *Gurvāṣṭakam* composed by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura says, “*catur-vidha-śrī-bhagavat-prasāda svādv-anna-tṛptān hari-bhakta-saṅghān.*” There is a poetic translation of this *aṣṭakam* written in Bengali:

*carvya-cuṣya-lehya-peya-rasamaya,
prasādānna kṛṣṇera ati svādu hoya
bhakta-āsvādane nija tṛpta roya,
vandi sei gurura caraṇa-kamala*

from the Bengali rendition of Śrī Gurvāṣṭakam

by Śrīmad Bhaktiviveka Bhāratī Gosvāmī Mahārāja

The four kinds of foodstuffs, which are chewed (*carvya*), sucked (*cuṣya*), licked (*lehya*), and drunk (*peya*), are filled with *rasa* (divine nectar). When these foodstuffs are accepted by Śrī Kṛṣṇa and become His *prasāda*, they become exceedingly tasteful. Śrī Guru always becomes satisfied by making the devotees relish such *prasāda*. I adore the lotus feet of such a *guru*.

Through one special elucidation on this verse we learn that “Śrī Gurudeva attains supreme satisfaction by making the multitudes of *hari-bhaktas*, who are completely free from *anarthas*, relish one of the four types of *bhagavad-*

rasa – dāsya, sakhya, vātsalya or madhura – according to their own moods of service in their eternally perfected forms (*svarūpa-siddha sevā-bhāva*). Let the lotus feet of such a *guru* be the sole object of our adoration.”^{xxxviii}³

Therefore, today we hold the merciful lotus feet of Śrī Guru on our heads and, according to his orders and directions, within our hearts we nourish the hope of distributing many varieties of *mahā-prasāda* from the festival of the *Gauḍīya*, a festival that brings about the meeting of *viṣaya* and *āśraya*.^{xxxix}⁴ We do not know how successful we will be in accomplishing the heavy responsibility (*guru-dayitva*) of distributing such *mahā-prasāda*. Still, we maintain great hope and firm faith within our hearts that by the mercy of *sad-guru* a lame man can traverse mountains and a dumb man can become qualified to perform *kṛṣṇa-kīrtana*.

It is an extremely difficult task to distribute this *mahā-prasāda*. Śrī-*mahāprasāda*, Govinda, śrī-*nāma* and the Vaiṣṇavas are all transcendental, but for those who have very few pious credits (*svalpa-puṇyāvēna*) sufficient intelligence to realize this has not arisen. Therefore *Harī-bhakti-vilāsa*, the “law book” for Vaiṣṇavas (*vaiṣṇava-smṛti*), enjoins that because *smārtas* are absorbed in gross reward seeking activity, they should be deceived by offering them some worldly thing instead of offering them *mahā-prasāda*. Śrī *Gauḍīya Patrikā* is actually Vaiṣṇava. Therefore, the other three – śrī-*mahāprasāda*, Govinda and śrī-*nāma* – are all contained within it. By the mercy of *guru* and Vaiṣṇavas we are merely engaged as its distributors; that is indeed our *sevā*.

Śrīmatī Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī and those in Her anugatya are the cooks of the bhoga

Although time, place and circumstance are not considered when distributing *mahā-prasāda*, it is still prohibited to distribute it to faithless people. Clear proof of this is found in *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* (18.67), “*idaṁ te nātapaskāya* – You should never explain the essence of this *Gītā-śāstra* to anyone whose senses are uncontrolled, who is a non-devotee, who is devoid of a serving mood, or who is envious of Me.”

We do not deserve any credit in the matter of distributing *mahā-prasāda*. The sole credit goes to the one who cooks the *bhoga*,⁵ to the one who offers the *bhoga*, to the enjoyer of that *bhoga*, and to His merciful remnants – śrī *mahā-prasāda*.^{xi}⁶ Śrī Lakṣmi-priya and Viṣṇu-priya cook *bhoga* for Śrī Gaurāṅga, and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī cooks *bhoga* for Śrī Vinoda-bihārī.

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Her. Her friends, Lalitā and the other *sakhīs*, have the full right to Her remnants.^{xlii} *Śrī-guru-pāda-padma*, who is the best among the followers of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, becomes completely satisfied by causing the *jīvas* to taste that *mahā-prasāda* in accordance with their respective qualifications in a particular *rasa*.

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Śrīman Mahāprabhu's Prema-maya Dharma
by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Gosvāmī Mahārāja

Mahāprabhu Tattva

*namo mahā-vadānyāya kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāya te
kṛṣṇāya kṛṣṇa-caitanya nāmne gaura-tviṣe namaḥ*

I offer my humble obeisances to that supremely magnanimous personality, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. He is the original form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but now, as Śrī Gaurasundara, He has assumed the golden complexion of Śrīmatī Rādhikā and He is freely bestowing *śrī kṛṣṇa-prema*.

aiṣṇavas who are thoroughly acquainted with *tattva* (fundamental principles regarding the Absolute Truth) have described Śrī Kṛṣṇa in His form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu as the supremely magnanimous (*mahā-vadānya*) personality who bestows *kṛṣṇa-prema*. He appeared in Śrīdhāma Māyāpura, having descended from Goloka. To consider Him an ordinary devotee or a mere human is offensive, erroneous, and a sign of ignorance.

Various scriptures, like the Vedas and the Purāṇas, assert that He is Bhagavān Himself. All His activities are called *līlā*, or divine sportive pastimes. They are not ordinary activities like those of the *jīvas* in this world. Each and every one of His characteristics is transcendental and devoid of enjoying mood and trickery. His characteristics are fully conscious, fully loving, and completely free from any trace of illusion (*māyā*). To accept His activities as a principle of the material mode of goodness would be tantamount to accepting falsehood. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself explained this in *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.9):

*janma karma ca me divyam
evam yo vetti tattvataḥ
tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma*

naiti mām eti so 'rjuna

O Arjuna, My birth and activities are transcendental. One who knows this in truth does not take another material birth after giving up the present body. Rather, it is certain that he attains Me in My spiritual abode.

None of Śrī Bhagavān's activities are material. His pastimes are known by the name *līlā* in order to help one differentiate between His activities and the activities of the ordinary *jīvas* in this realm. *Līlā* (transcendental pastimes) and *karma* (mundane fruitive activities) are completely different. One who thinks that the word *līlā* refers to material activities, only exposes his foolishness:

*avajānanti mām mūḍhā
mānuṣīm tanum āśritam
param bhāvam ajānanto
mama bhūta-maheśvaram*

Bhagavad-gītā (9.11)

Unable to comprehend My supreme nature, foolish people disrespect My human-like spiritual form, considering it to be made of five material elements. But I am the creator, controller, and maintainer of all living entities. I alone am their true Lord.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.5.32) states:

*kṛṣṇa-varṇam tviṣākṛṣṇam
sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārṣadam
yajṣaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair
yajanti hi su-medhasaḥ*

In the age of Kali, Śrī Kṛṣṇa appears with a golden complexion (*akṛṣṇa*). He is constantly singing the two syllables *kṛ-ṣṇa*, and He is accompanied by His associates, servitors, weapons and confidential companions. Intelligent people worship Him by performing *saṅkīrtana-yajṣa*.

From this verse we learn that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. He is not an *aṁśa*, or expansion of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Kṛṣṇa only appears as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in the Kali-yuga of the twenty-eighth *catur-yuga* of Vaivasvata *manvantara*. In the Kali-yuga of the other *catur-yugas* He appears as Śrī Kṛṣṇa's expansion, and accepts a blackish complexion (*śyāma-varṇa*).^{xiv} It is explained that the form of Absolute Reality that appears in the Kali-yuga of the twenty-eighth *catur-yuga* is not the same as the worshipful

tattva that appears in other Kali-yugas. If *varṇam* is interpreted as “complexion”, then the words *kṛṣṇa-varṇam* indicate that Mahāprabhu, who appeared in the above mentioned Kali-yuga, is certainly *kṛṣṇa-tattva*.^{xvii}² This subject matter is specifically clarified by the verse “*antaḥ kṛṣṇam bahir gauram*” (*Tattva-sandarbha* 2).^{xviii}³

All Became Vaiṣṇavas

In His form as Śrīman Mahāprabhu, Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra performs the function of distributing *kṛṣṇa-prema*, a function He did not manifest in *kṛṣṇa-līlā*. He is thus celebrated as *mahā-vadānya* (supremely munificent) only in His form as Mahāprabhu. Indeed, this conclusion is also revealed in the verse *anarpita-carīm cirāt karuṇayāvatīrṇaḥ kalau (Vidagdha-mādhava* 1.2), and it is this conclusion that marks the unique and exalted speciality of Mahāprabhu’s *līlā*.

Prema is inherent within Mahāprabhu’s preaching of the holy name. His preaching is not devoid of *prema* in any way. The glory of His *līlā* is that each and every aspect of it is imbued with *prema* – His wanderings, His conversations, His study of the scriptures, His going on pilgrimage, and so forth. He thus distributed the holy name throughout India. Seeing His transcendental madness born of *prema*, the citizens of the entire country were drawn to Him. Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (*Madhya-līlā* 7.95–105) describes His travels, during which He was overwhelmed with *prema*:

*matta-simha-prāya prabhu karilā gamana
premāveśe yāya kari’ nāma-saṅkīrtana*

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu moved like an uncontrolled and intoxicated lion. As He wandered, completely absorbed in the rapture of *prema*, He performed *nāma-saṅkīrtana*:

*kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! he
kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! he
kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! rakṣa mām
kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! pāhi mām*

“Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Protect Me. Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Always take care of Me.

*rāma! rāghava! rāma! rāghava!
rāma! rāghava! rakṣa mām
kṛṣṇa! keśava! kṛṣṇa! keśava!*

kṛṣṇa! keśava! pāhi mām

“O Lord Rāma, descendant of King Raghu, protect Me. O Kṛṣṇa, O Keśava, killer of the Keśī demon, always be my maintainer.”

ei śloka paḍi' pathe calilā gaurahari
loka dekhi' pathe kahe, – bala 'hari' 'hari'

Śrī Gaurahari proceeded along the path, reciting these verses, which are composed of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's names. He would ask whoever He saw to sing, “Hari! Hari!”

sei loka prema-matta haṣā bale 'hari' 'kṛṣṇa'
prabhura pāche saṅge yāya darśana-satṛṣṇa

Consequently, whoever He saw would become intoxicated with *prema* and start calling out “Hari” and “Kṛṣṇa”. They would then follow Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, being most anxious for His *darśana* and His constant association.

kata-kṣaṇe rahi' prabhu tāre ālīngiyā
vidāya karila tāre śakti saṣcāriyā

After some time Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu would embrace each of them and infuse them with transcendental potency. Afterward, He would send them back to their homes.

sei-jana nija-grāme kariyā gamana
'kṛṣṇa' bali' hāse, kānde, nāce anukṣaṇa

They returned to their respective villages, constantly calling out “Kṛṣṇa”. At different times they would laugh, cry, and dance.

yāre dekhe, tāre kahe, – kaha kṛṣṇa-nāma
ei-mata 'vaiṣṇava' kaila saba nija-grāma

As empowered representatives of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu they would ask whoever they met to chant the names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In this way they transformed all of their fellow villagers into Vaiṣṇavas.

grāmāntara haite dekhite āila yata jana
tāñra darśana-kṛpāya haya tāñra sama

Whoever came from other villages to see these empowered representatives of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, would themselves become Vaiṣṇavas by the effect of that merciful *darśana*.

*sei yāi' grāmera loka vaiṣṇava karaya
anya-grāmī āsi' tāñre dekhi' vaiṣṇava haya*

Upon returning to their own villages, the new Vaiṣṇavas would in turn transform all the other villagers into Vaiṣṇavas and anyone coming from other villages would also become Vaiṣṇavas simply by seeing any of them.

*sei yāi' āra grāme kare upadeśa
ei-mata 'vaiṣṇava' haila saba dakṣiṇa-deśa*

In turn such empowered representatives visited other villages, instructing the native people of those places. Thus all the people of South India became Vaiṣṇavas.

*ei-mata pathe yāite śata śata jana
'vaiṣṇava' karena tāñre kari' ālīṅgana*

In this way, while He went on His way, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu transformed hundreds and hundreds of people into Vaiṣṇavas by the effect of His embrace.

What to speak of causing humans to become full of *prema* and making them Vaiṣṇavas, in Jharikhaṇḍa Śrīmān Mahāprabhu even made all the moving and non-moving creatures of the forest mad with *prema*. By this act He became *mahā-vadānya* in a way that is totally unparalleled.

The Fruitless Preaching of the Impure Hearted

It is to be noted that when Mahāprabhu told someone, "Say 'Hari, Hari,' " that person would do as He said and become maddened with *prema*. However, when an ordinary, unqualified person instructs someone to say 'Hari, Hari,' the person he instructs does not achieve even a shadow of *prema*, what to speak of becoming maddened by *prema*. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

(10.14.3) advises: "*san-mukharitām bhavadīya-vārtām* – one should hear from self-realized devotees about Śrī Bhagavān's holy name and transcendental pastimes." If someone attempts to distribute the holy name, but *prema* has not arisen in his heart because he maintains separate interests (*anyābhilāṣa*), then the name that he utters will have no power to bestow *prema* upon others. Therefore, it is prohibited even to hear descriptions of Hari from the lips of such an unqualified person:

avaīṣṇava mukhodgīrṇam
pūtam harikathāmṛtam
śravanam naive kartavyam
sarpocchiṣṭam yathā payaḥ

Padma Purāṇa, Haribhakti Vilāsa,
and Gauḍīya-kaṇṭhahāra (2.39)

The nectarean topics of Śrī Hari are always puri-fying, but if they emanate from the mouth of a non-Vaiṣṇava, it is prohibited to hear them, for they become as poisonous as the milk touched by the lips of a serpent.

The scriptures warn us that one becomes imbued with the qualities of the person one associates with. Unfortunate people become attracted by the preaching of those who do not desire to please Śrī Kṛṣṇa, (*anyābhilāṣīs*). That preaching, although full of variegated cleverness, cannot rightfully be termed “the propagation of *prema-dharma*”.

It is inappropriate to call someone who is attracted to sense enjoyment and worldly merriment a devotee (*bhakta*). Every conditioned soul is greedy to taste delicious *mahā-prasāda*. Those who are attracted by palatial mansions, gardens like Nandana-kānana (the pleasure gardens of the heavenly planets), and beautiful wildlife sanctuaries, are not *bhaktas*. Wealthy people in particular are addicted to sense enjoyment. Devotees keep a distance from them, considering their association to be harmful. To render service to them is never *bhakta-sevā*, or service to a devotee.

The association of many such enjoyers, as well as cinema actors and actresses, is to be regarded as harmful. It would not be correct to see them as equal to Lakhyahīra, the prostitute who was delivered by Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, and to believe that an ordinary devotee could deliver them. It is inappropriate to call the preaching that is smeared with pride in associating with cinema stars and sportsmen, “Mahāprabhu’s *prema-dharma*”.

“*Pratiṣṭhāra bhaye purī gelā palāṣā* – Fearful of receiving fame as a great devotee, Śrī Mādhavendra Purī escaped from Remuṇā” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 4.147). This is an example of pure Vaiṣṇavism. On the other hand a person may overly exaggerate the effect of his preaching to gain *pratiṣṭhā*. He may proudly show a photo of himself with a famous person and claim his activities to be preaching. In this way he will receive praise from those who are averse to Bhagavān. But to what extent can such preaching be accepted as *prema-dharma*? This is to be seriously contemplated. The mercy of a rich person can make one rich, but it cannot make one a *premikā* (lover of Bhagavān).

Vairāgya is at the Foundation of Prema-dharma

India is a country of spirituality, but in the course of time the spiritual practices of the Indian people have become diluted. Consequently India has been invaded by religions such as Buddhism, Jainism, Islam and Christianity. From the perspective of spirituality, none of these religions bestow the highest conceptions of divinity. These religions have only been spread successfully in neglected communities that are economically depressed. In some places this has occurred with the help of the sword and in other places by offering sense enjoyment.

People were not converted to these religions because they were attracted to their elevated spiritual principles. If, out of poverty, someone rejects his own *dharma* and becomes converted to another religion in exchange for a higher salary, a beautiful lady, an acre of land for farming, a comfortable home to live in, medical treatment for his family, or assistance in raising his children and marrying them off, it does not indicate that one has been attracted by *prema*.

Mahāprabhu's *prema-dharma* was never propagated like this. What to speak of approaching poor people with such intentions, Mahāprabhu did not even give His *darśana* to wealthy people and kings, even when they requested it on numerous occasions, because He considered them to be materialists. He did not build Himself a store house of sense gratification by rendering service to them or by satisfying their minds.

Vairāgya, true renunciation, is only prominent in Mahāprabhu. In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* (25.183), Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu says to Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, "*kāñthā-karaṅgiyā mora kāṅgāla bhakta-gaṇa* – My devotees are impoverished. All they have in their possession is a torn quilt and a water pot." And *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 6.220)* states, "*yāhā dekhi' prīta hana gaura-bhagavān* – When Bhagavān Gaurasundara sees the worldly detachment (*vairāgya*) of His devotees, which is prominent in them, He becomes extremely pleased."

In the *dharma* practised and propagated by Mahāprabhu, associating with women is strictly prohi-bited. He never even approved of the marriage plans of pseudo-devotees, who are basically just sense enjoyers. But He never dishonoured the principle *anāsaktasya viṣayān yathārham upayujataḥ* (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 2.255). This means, one who is not attached to satisfying his senses, yet accepts everything in relation to Kṛṣṇa, is rightly situated above possessiveness.

He thus had household associates, such as Advaita Ācārya and Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura, but He never supported the activities of householders who were attached to women for enjoyment. His preachers propagated "*vairāgya-yukta bhaktirasa* – the transcendental humours of *bhakti*, endowed with extreme attachment for transcendence and consequent complete detachment from the phenomenal world." Not even a touchstone could attract them. "*Na dhanam na janam na sundarim kavitam va jagadisa kamaye* – O Jagadīśa, I do not desire wealth, nor followers, nor do I desire

beautiful poetry (here meaning knowledge)” (*Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka* 4). This verse comprised the foundation of their very being.

The behaviour of a renounced person is known from Śrīmān Mahāprabhu’s statement “*vairāgī haiyā kare prakṛti sambhāṣaṇa* – I cannot see the face of a *vairāgī* who converses with a woman with an enjoying attitude” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā* 2.117). Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has highlighted this in a very ideal way in his song “*laye sādhuveśa, āne upadeśa, e bara māyār raṅga* – Simply because I have adopted the attire of a sādhu I take it upon myself to instruct others. This is *māyā*’s great trick.” And Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has mentioned, “*kanaka-kāminī pratiṣṭhā-bāghinī chādiyāche yāre sei ta vaiṣṇava* – Desires for money, women, and fame are like tigresses. Those who have relinquished them are indeed Vaiṣṇavas.”

Translated from *Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā*, Year 49, Issue 11

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Śrī Prema-vivarta—Love Reversed

by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja

Śrī Gaurāṅga’s intimate associate, Śrī Jagadānanda Paṇḍita, writes in his book, *Śrī Prema-vivarta*, “*pīriti boliyā tina-ṭi āṅkhara, vidita bhuvana-mājhe* – the three letters *pī, ri, ti* are of universal renown.” In other words, these three letters are the essence of everything. We often hear, “*ḍāi akṣara prema-kā paḍe, so paṇḍita hoi* – anyone who has realized the two and a half letters ‘*p-re, ma*’ is a true scholar.” Within the three letters *pī, ri, ti* lies the essence of the Vedas and Upaniṣads, especially *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and the books of the Gosvāmīs.

Real Love is Never Expressed

Śrī Jagadānanda Paṇḍita has written that one who is truly in love will never tell their beloved, “Oh, I love you.” Will he say that? Never! He will conceal his love. Would he open his heart to his beloved and directly explain the extent of his love? To do so would not be true love, or *pīriti*, but rather mundane, worldly love. One who is truly in love will never reveal it openly. For example, Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa surpasses all others, yet She never openly expresses Her love for Him. Instead, She says:

na prema-gandho ‘sti darāpi me harau

krandāmi saubhāgya-bharam prakāśitum

vaṁśī-vilāsyānanalokanam vinā

bibharmi yat prāṇa-pataṅgakān vṛthā

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 2.45)

I have not even a scent of love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. I am crying simply to flaunt whatever fortune I once obtained. If I truly loved Him, how could I endure this useless life bereft of the sight of His lotus face as He sports with His flute?

Śrīmatī Rādhikā is sobbing, “Alas! I have not even the slightest trace of love for the worshipful feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.” She is writhing in utter anxiety and crying, “The aboriginal girls of Śrī Govardhana worship the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa with profuse love. The she-deer roaming in the Vṛndāvana forest and even the clouds in the sky, have immense love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The river Yamunā has so much love for Him that she embraces His form with her rippling waves on the pretext of bowing at His lotus feet. Alas, I have no such *prema*.” These are the moods of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Śrīman Mahāprabhu would become absorbed in Her moods and, weeping bitterly, he would speak in this way.

Just see! Although such love is never expressed, Śrī Jagadānanda has revealed his heart and has described Mahāprabhu’s love.

Those truly in love – transcendental love – never say, “I love you.” Only worldly people with mundane love (*jaḍa-prema*) speak so openly. Such love is not true love (*prema*); it is lust (*kāma*). We must transcend this level of love, and learn to conceal our *prema* to protect it from contamination.

Contrary Emotions

Everything Śrī Jagadānanda is writing about concerns *prema-vivarta*, the reversed movements of love. An ordinary person can never understand this *prema-vivarta*; only devotees can understand it. The word *āvartana* means “to move” or “to turn”; so *vivarta* means *viśeṣa-āvarta*, “a movement that is reversed in a unique manner”. It is the state of love when it turns against its natural flow.

This was portrayed when Śrīman Mahāprabhu departed from Purī to go to Vṛndāvana, leaving Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita behind. At that time, Śrī Gadādhara told Him, “Of what use is my *kṣetra-sannyāsa*^{xlviii}? I only took *kṣetra-sannyāsa* to be with You; it was not for any purpose of my own. I do not want it!” These contrary emotions were thus churning his heart.

We see another example of this in Śrī Jagadānanda himself. He has written, “I left Śrīman Mahāprabhu, with His permission, and set off for Vṛndāvana. Alas, who could be more insane? Why did I take His leave?” Śrī Jagadānanda initially left for Vṛndāvana, but ended up in Navadvīpa, which is the real Vṛndāvana, concealed. Śrī Jagadānanda was living very closely with Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, but he never stood before Him to say, “I love you!” In turn, Śrīman Mahāprabhu treated him the same way:

After carefully preparing excellent sandalwood oil, Śrī Jagadānanda underwent great trouble to bring it from Bengal for Mahāprabhu, but Mahāprabhu simply told Govinda to use it in the lamps offered to Śrī Jagannātha in the temple.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu loves all of His associates. Was Choṭā Haridāsa not His associate? Did Mahāprabhu not have affection for him? According to outsiders, He rejected him, but later He was so anxious to see him that He would inquire, “Oh, what happened to Choṭā Haridāsa?” When someone finally informed Him that Choṭā Haridāsa had committed suicide in Prayāga, He simply remarked, “Oh well, good.” But then, as a Gāndharva, that same Haridāsa would secretly come and sing for Mahāprabhu. He had not rejected him after all.

To the eyes of outsiders, Śrī Rāmacandra banished Śrī Sītā-devī, but did He really reject her? There is no question of Him rejecting her; she is not someone to reject! If you have true love (*prema*) for someone, you can never leave them. Lust can easily be abandoned, but no one can possibly abandon *aprākṛta prema*, true spiritual love. Could Śrī Rāma leave Sītā? Could she leave Him? He simply staged her exile and then He waited for Her in Their spiritual abode.

Once, Śrī Yaśodā bound Śrī Kṛṣṇa to a grinding mortar. Sometimes she brandishes a stick at Him, chastises Him and threatens to punish Him. Sometimes she even slaps Him and twists His ear. What is this? Is this *prema*? It is *prema-vivarta*, the reversed movements of love. What can be truly understood from an external perspective?

If another person sees us chastising our child, they will think we are very cruel and they will assume that we have no love for our child. But our chastisement is in fact an example of *prema-vivarta*. *Prema* is thus extremely difficult to understand. As Śrī Yaśodā sometimes threatens Kṛṣṇa with a stick or twists His ear, Śrī Śacī-maiyā also chastises Gaurahari and sometimes, she punishes Him by keeping Him home from school.

Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra left Vṛndāvana and went to Mathurā and then Dvārakā. In the eyes of all, this act was extremely cruel. The *gopīs* were writhing in the pain of separation from Him. They were dying as they wept and cried out to Him. Even Uddhava could not bear this sight. “How could Śrī Kṛṣṇa be so cruel?” He thought. “How could He have left this place? How could He leave those who are crying for Him?” But in truth, Kṛṣṇa did not leave, and neither Śrī Rādhā nor Śrī Kṛṣṇa ever forgot each other. This is an example of *mādana-bhāva*, the paramount expression of *prema*, manifested solely in the meeting of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

According to the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa left Vraja and never again returned to meet the Vrajavāsīs. This is *prema-vivarta*, love reversed; it is beyond the understanding of the ordinary man.

Thus *prema*, true love, is completely incomprehensible. And as stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.14.5) it is especially unique and rare in this world:

*muktānām api siddhānām
nārāyaṇa-parāyaṇaḥ
su-durlabhaḥ praśāntātmā
kotiṣv api mahā-mune*

O illustrious sage, among millions of liberated, perfected souls one may be a devotee of Śrī Nārāyaṇa. Such peaceful devotees are extremely rare.

We understand that this verse refers to one with *prema-bhakti*. Among thousands and even millions of such devotees, a single *vraja-bhakta* who is developing the moods of the *gopīs*, is extremely rare.

Beyond Mundane Limitation

Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s dear Jagā, Śrī Jagadānanda, says:

*caṇḍī-dāsa, vidyāpati, karṇāmṛta, rāyera gīti
e-saba amūlya śāstra jāna
e-sabe nāhika kāma, e-saba premera dhāma
aprākṛta tāhāte vidhāna*

Śrī Prema-vivarta (16.12)

One should know all these invaluable scriptures: the songs of Caṇḍīdāsa and Vidyāpati, Śrī Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura’s *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta*, and Śrī Rāyā Rāmānanda’s *Śrī Jagannātha-vallabha-nāṭaka* and his many songs. No lust contaminates these scriptures which are abodes of immaculate *prema* and are of the nature of transcendence.

The words *rāyera gīti* refer to Śrī Rāyā Rāmānanda’s many songs, one of which is as follows:

*pahilehi rāga nayana-bhaṅge bhela
anudina bāḍhala, avadhi nā gela*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (*Madhya-līlā* 8.194)

At first, we grew attached to each other through exchanges of shy glances. That attachment grew day by day, and never found an end.

Śrī Jagadānanda Paṇḍita has written, “*strī-puruṣa-vivaraṇa, je kichu tañhi varṇana, se-saba upamā-mātra sāra* – Any description about ordinary men and women that may be found in these books is simply a comparison made for the sake of explanation.” Lusty people, however, will assume that these descriptions concern ordinary men and women.

The transcendental moods of Śrī Rādhā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa cannot be described in mundane language, which is crippled by its errors, boundaries, and limitations. The mundane is bound by limitations. For example, who can understand Draupadī’s relationship with Śrī Kṛṣṇa? She is the wife of Arjuna and his brothers, who are all Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s very dear friends and He is theirs. But Draupadī, their wife, also addresses Kṛṣṇa as her *sakhā*, her dear, intimate friend, and He in turn addresses her as His *sakhī*. Why and how can He interact with her in this way? In the eyes of the world, this is extremely difficult to reconcile. Naturally, she sees the Pāṇḍavas as her husbands, yet she sees Śrī Kṛṣṇa as her beloved. This is impossible and unacceptable from a worldly perspective.

Also, Kuntī-devī as Kṛṣṇa’s aunt is a mother to Him. But what are her feelings for Him? Who is Kṛṣṇa to her? Externally, she nurtures motherly affection (*vātsalya-bhāva*) for Him, but internally she experiences something quite different – she loves Him as her *prāṇa-vallabha*, the beloved of her life.

In what way is Uttarā, Parikṣit Mahārāja’s mother, related to Śrī Kṛṣṇa? He was her father-in-law’s brother-in-law and cousin.^{xix} By age, she could be Kṛṣṇa’s grand-daughter. But her own son, Parikṣit Mahārāja, is instructing her to maintain her present, external relationship with Kṛṣṇa yet to feel that He is her beloved. This is impossible in this world. Moreover, even though Parikṣit Mahārāja is a man, he also regards Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the beloved of his life! Anyone, man or woman, who chants the *śrī gopāla-mantra* (worshipping Śrī Kṛṣṇa as *gopī-jana-vallabha*) longs for the love that Śrīmatī Rādhikā and the *gopīs* nurture for Him. That love is *pīriti*, true love. Nowhere else can such love be found in its entirety.

The fullest expression of true love is seen in Śrīmatī Rādhikā. In comparison, Śrī Kṛṣṇa experiences only a fraction of such love. His love touches *mahābhāva*, but it cannot go beyond that. No matter how high His love extends, it cannot even reach the same level as Śrī Lalitā’s and Śrī Viśākhā’s love, which touch *ruḍa* and *adhiruḍa*, the highest states of *mahābhava*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa has no such love. In the higher stages of *prema*, from *anurāga* and up, the moods of Śrīmatī Rādhikā are predominant, not the moods of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Our Gosvāmīs describe these exalted and complex moods, which are beyond the understanding of the general people. These topics are essential for those who wish to do *bhajana* but they are not suitable for anyone else.

Prema Cannot be Described

From the summit of *prema*, the stages of *mahābhāva*, *modana* and *mādana*, to its smallest particle – *śraddhā* (faith) – all are entirely transcendental. They are all elements (*aṁśas*) of that immaculate love. *Pāramārthika śraddhā*, true transcendental faith, is to be regarded as fully spiritual. The awakening of this *śraddhā* begins the *sādhaka*'s spiritual journey. And his outer and inner behaviour will develop accordingly. We must clearly understand that it is not something mundane. Although it is the smallest fraction of Śrīmatī Rādhikā's *prema*, it is nevertheless a particle of full cognizance, eternal existence, and pure joy (*sat-cit-ānanda*). It manifests in two ways: as external symptoms (*taṭastha-lakṣaṇa*) and as inner emotions (*svarūpa-lakṣaṇa*). We can describe the outer symptoms of that *śraddhā* to some extent, but no one can express its inner, constitutional characteristics.

We can recognize the presence of true love from the ecstatic symptoms that appear as the outward expressions of various *bhāvas*, or moods. These include thirteen *anubhāvas* (such as dancing, singing and hiccupping), thirty-three *vyabhicārī-bhāvas* (such as madness, jubilation and eagerness), and especially eight *sāttvika-bhāvas* (such as crying, horripilation and faltering of the voice).³

For example, we may see someone crying, “Alas! O Kṛṣṇa!” He may be fainting, trembling, or experiencing other transformations of ecstasy. We may be able to differentiate between the different intensities of those transformations: *dhumāyita* (smoldering), *jvalita* (burning), *dīpta* (blazing), *uddīpta* (raging), and *sudīpta* (blazing in all brilliance). According to various symptoms we may be able to discern the different levels of love in the devotees, we may be able to detect the presence of some true love, but in other cases what we perceive may not be love; it may merely be a show. Thus, based on external symptoms, we cannot confidently ascertain the degree of someone's love.

On the other hand, when Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī was hearing Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī's heart-rending recitation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, he experienced many *sāttvika-bhāvas*, as did everyone else listening. One person was foaming at the mouth, another was weeping profusely, while someone else was crying out in anguish. Yet in Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, the *sāttvika-bhāvas* did not manifest externally. He just sat there quietly. It amazed some devotees that he appeared to be unaffected. But, internally, what had actually happened? There was no knowing whether he was dead or alive for he had exceeded the limits of *sāttvika-bhāva*. It is extremely difficult to discern the *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa* of *prema*, or even of any of its elements such as *śraddhā*.

Prema is defined as follows:

samyañ-masṛṇita-svānto mamatvā tīsayāṅkitaḥ

bhāvaḥ sa eva sāndrātmā budhaiḥ premā nigadyate

Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.4.1)

When *bhāva* completely melts the heart, it creates deep possessiveness for Śrī Kṛṣṇa and becomes greatly intensified. According to the learned, this signifies the appearance of *prema*.

How can anyone describe this intense *mamatā* (possessive attachment)? Who can state the extent of a person's *mamatā*, or what he experiences internally? One may observe another's outer symptoms of *prema* and try to describe them, without much success. If even the external symptoms of *prema* cannot be described, then what can be said of a love so profound that it becomes *prema-vivarta*?

The intrinsic nature of *prema* is most difficult to portray. Even the scriptures fail to describe it, and simply define it as possessive attachment to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Only Śrī Kṛṣṇa is eternally the object of such attachment. No one else, including Śrīmatī Rādhikā or any other *gopī*, is ever described as its object. Nevertheless, overwhelmed by *prema-vivarta* Śrī Kṛṣṇa expresses this same *mamatā* for Śrīmatī Rādhikā. That is *prema-vivarta*.

Śrī Jagadānanda Paṇḍita writes:

kṛṣṇa-prema su-nirmala, jena śuddha gaṅgā-jala,
sei premā amṛtera sindhu
nirmala se anurāga, nāhi tāhe jaḍa-dāga
śukla-vastra śunya-masī-bindu

Śrī Prema-vivarta (16.15)

Śrī kṛṣṇa-prema is immaculate like the pure waters of the Gaṅgā, and is an ocean of nectar. That *anurāga* is uncontaminated and untainted by mundanity; it is like a spotless white cloth.

True Faith Never Ceases

What to speak of one with *prema*, even a person in whom firm transcendental faith (*pāramārthika śraddhā*) has arisen says, "*khaṇḍa khaṇḍa hoyā deha jāya yadi prāṇa, tabu āmi vadane nā chāḍi harināma* – My body may be cut to pieces and my life extracted from my body, but I will never stop chanting *harināma*." This is an expression of pure, spiritual emotion.

On the other hand, we see that many who have taken *dīkṣā* and *sannyāsa* initiation and who have been chanting for twenty-five years, and even preaching all over the world, leave their so-called *prema* to enjoy with a

woman. To please her, they even stoop to eating onions, garlic, meat and fish. Thus they become entangled in worldly life. They give up chanting *harināma* and consequently abandon their very relationship with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. What kind of *śraddhā* did they have? Was it real? If one's *śraddhā* is really transcendental it can never vanish. Thus, there is a great difference between true, spiritual faith (*pāramārthika-śraddhā*) and ordinary, mundane faith (*laukika-śraddhā*).

True faith can only be achieved by contact with *śuddha-bhaktas*. In other words, by their grace, and by the mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which is always dependent on their grace, we may attain the company of *sādhus*. Otherwise, without that mercy, as it is said, "*saṁsāra bhramite kono sādhu-saṅga nāi* – we can search the entire universe, but we will never find any *sādhu-saṅga*." Thus, by *sādhu-saṅga* we can attain true *śraddhā* and eventually all perfection.

On the other hand, there are those who develop simple, mundane faith by indiscriminate hearing. They have no steady faith in their *guru* and they feel no desire to serve him. Their faith in *bhakti* is flickering day and night like a candle-flame. Do such people have *pāramārthika-śraddhā*? Certainly not. When *pāramārthika-śraddhā* appears, it remains fixed and steady forever. That *śraddhā* soon develops into *niṣṭhā*, complete steadiness. Ordinary faith (*laukika śraddhā*) can never mature into *niṣṭhā* even if a person takes *sannyāsa* or endeavours in various ways for a million births.

Understanding Through Bhajana

Do Śrīmatī Rādhikā, Lalitā, Viśākhā and the other *gopīs* ever think that their *prema* for Śrī Kṛṣṇa is greater than Śrī Yaśodā's? Does this thought ever cross their minds? Never!

And yet, does Śrī Yaśodā know that Kṛṣṇa finds more satisfaction in the *gopīs'* love for Him? Yes, that is why she always provides opportunities for them to serve Him. Her heart is so soft and magnanimous.

We can never grasp these conceptions with our mundane understanding. These moods will only come by performing *bhajana* under the guidance of Vaiṣṇavas. It is therefore stated:

*tan-nāma-rūpa-caritādi-sukīrtanānu-
smṛtyoḥ krameṇa rasanā-manasī niyojya
tiṣṭhan vraje tad-anurāgi janānugāmī
kālaṁ nayed akhilam ity upadeśa-sāram*

You should utilize every moment by sequentially engaging your speech and mind in meticulously chanting and remembering Śrī Kṛṣṇa's names, form, qualities and pastimes while residing in Vraja under the guidance of the Vrajavāsīs, who have spontaneous love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This is the essence of all instruction.

This process is the only way to understand *prema*. However, true realization of this topic ultimately depends on our spiritual practice (*sādhana*). Therefore, Śrī Jagadānanda wrote, "*nirmala se anurāga, nāhi tā'he jaḍa-dāga* - that intense love is immaculate; it has not the slightest taint of mundanity."

Immersed in Anurāga

How can *anurāga* be defined? Each and every one of these terms has been coined with such precision after carefully examining and weighing their import that nothing can replace them. What word could possibly replace *anurāga*? English has no equivalent for *anurāga*. The word "love" lacks specificity. It is universally used for any and every expression of affection.

We must try to understand the import of *anurāga* in at least a general manner. With whatever little understanding I have, I will try to explain what I have gathered from *Jaiva-Dharma* and other places.

Prema is when there is every reason for love to cease, yet it only increases. When that *prema* swells, it completely melts the heart and becomes *sneha*, which is also of many varieties. When that *sneha* fully ripens and is thus enhanced, it becomes *māna*. *Māna* then evolves into a state called *praṇaya*, which may also appear prior to *māna*. Then comes *rāga*, a state in which the *viṣaya* and *āśraya* are perpetually colouring the love of Their hearts in newer and newer ways.

For example, when dyeing a cloth red, it is submerged again and again in the dye, and each time it emerges with a deeper colour. In the same way, the *āśraya*'s heart is forever enriched in a single mood. This is *rāga*; it will increase beyond all control until it reaches the utmost limit of *āśraya-prema*.

Prema exists in two forms - as the loved (*viṣaya*) and as the lover (*āśraya*). The *viṣaya* relishes love, cherishing it within His heart, while the *āśraya* relishes love by serving Him. When classifying these two aspects of love, all of our scriptures, especially those written by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, state that although Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the undivided ocean of all *prema* (*akhila-rasāmṛta-sindhu*) Himself, He also relishes that *prema* as the *viṣaya* by tasting the five primary moods of love, *śānta*, *dāsyā*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya*, *mādhurya*, as well as the seven secondary varieties, *hāsyā*, *adbhuta*, *vīra*, *karuṇa*, *raudra*, *bhayānaka*, and *bibhatsa*.

And who is the *āśraya*, or lover? All the devotees with these five primary moods are the *āśraya*, among whom the *gopīs* are the most exalted. And

among even them, Śrīmatī Rādhikā's eight *sakhīs*, or intimate friends, are foremost. But Śrīmatī Rādhikā Herself is the most exalted. The *āśraya-jātīya prema* in Her heart surpasses the *prema* in the hearts of all others. When Her love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the object of *prema* (*viṣaya*), reaches its utmost limits, it attains a state known as *sva-samvedya*.

In other words, when the lovers, the *gopīs* headed by Śrīmatī Rādhikā, become totally immersed in serving, remembering, and meditating on Śrī Kṛṣṇa, then they completely forget themselves. They forget who is relishing love and who is giving love. They even forget to perform their services. That love and the joy it creates is all that remains in their hearts, nothing else. Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya has written, “*nā so ramaṇa, nā hāma ramaṇī, duṅhu mana manobhava peśala jāni* – He is no longer the enjoyer, nor I the enjoyed. Our minds have merged together in our mutual love.” In this state, Śrīmatī Rādhikā knows no difference between Herself and Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

When the *gopīs* were writhing in separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa after He disappeared from the *rāsa*, their *prema* reached such a height that they forgot their own identities as *gopīs*. In their madness, they thought themselves to be Kṛṣṇa and began enacting His pastimes.

Similarly, as Śrīmatī Rādhikā serves Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the state of *sva-samvedya* She is conscious of only Her own delight. She forgets that She is meant to serve Him and in that state, even if She continues to serve Him, She forgets that She is doing so. She revels solely in the delight of Her own feeling. This is *sva-samvedya-daśā*. *Sva* means “personally” or “own”; therefore, only one who has love can understand this topic. Lalitā, Viśākhā and even Śrī Kṛṣṇa cannot realize these feelings of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. To do so, Śrī Kṛṣṇa must come as Śrīman Mahāprabhu because this *sva-samvedya-daśā* is exclusively experienced by Śrīmatī Rādhikā.

True Love is for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa

Try to understand all these topics, especially the astonishing glory of this *prema*. First we should strive to attain true *śraddhā*, true *niṣṭhā*, and then true *ruci*. Then gradually, by the mercy of Bhagavān and the Vaiṣṇavas, we may begin to understand these topics. If a person does not develop any qualification, and is simply awarded the name of a *gopī*, as can be so cheaply done in Rādhā-kuṇḍa, he will attain no substantial advancement.

In truth, no one in this world has true love for anyone else. For whom can a person develop real love? It is only possible to develop *prīti* (true love) for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and those who have this *prīti* will nurture feelings of service to Them. As Śrī Jagadānanda said, “*nāhi tāhe jaḍā-dāga*”. That service will be untainted by anything mundane.

Gaura Premānande!

Preaching Report April-July 2007

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja's Summer World Tour
by Svāmī B. V. Mādhava

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rīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was the foremost pioneer of our Gauḍīya Sampradāya in the modern world. In an article printed in the *Sajjana Toṣaṇī* (the original *Harmonist* magazine), He expressed his realization:

“Lord Caitanya did not advent Himself to liberate only a few men of India. Rather, His main objective was to emancipate all living entities of all countries throughout the entire universe and preach the Eternal Religion. Lord Caitanya says in the *Caitanya Bhāgavata*: ‘In every town, country and village, My name will be sung.’ There is no doubt that this unquestionable order will come to pass. Very soon the unparalleled path of *harī-nāma-saṅkīrtana* will be propagated all over the world... Oh for that day when the fortunate English, French, Russian, German and American people will take up banners, *mṛdangas* and *kāṛatalas*, and raise *kīrtana* through their streets and towns. When will that day come? Oh for that day when the fair-skinned men from their side will raise up the chanting of ‘*Jaya Śacīnandana! Jaya Śacīnandana kī, jaya!*’ and join with the Bengali devotees.”

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's own son and the original founder of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda, made this prediction come true by engaging his disciples Śrīla Bhakti Hṛdaya Bon Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhakti Saraṅga Gosvāmī Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhakti Pradīpa Tīrtha Mahārāja and especially Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja in preaching in the Western countries. Many years after Śrīla Prabhupāda's disappearance *līlā*, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja brought a revolutionary awakening in the Western countries leading the way for many Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas who now preach Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *siddhānta* through-out the world.

He made my instructing spiritual master, *parivrājakācārya om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja, promise to help his disciples all over the world and bestowed his profuse blessings on him. Śrīla Gurudeva is the extremely devoted servant of Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, the dear most associate of Śrīla Prabhupāda and *sannyāsa guru* of Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja, and by the combined mercy of Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja and Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja, he is the foremost proponent of Vedic culture and philosophy in the modern world.

Malaysia

After a very successful Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā* this year, Śrīla Gurudeva coordinated the preaching efforts of the devotees staying in India and then prepared to begin his twenty-sixth world tour. Although he apparently left the sacred land of Bhārata-varṣa behind, he brought the treasures of the holy land with him. On the morning of the 4th of April he arrived at the international airport in Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia. He was greeted by about twenty devotees who placed flower garlands around his neck and offered him their obeisances. His summer preaching tour was now under way. After remaining in Kuala Lumpur for one day, he went to the home of his dear disciples Dr. Parameśvari dāsa Adhikarī and his wife Mālati-devī dāsī on the nearby island of Penang, a place of international tourism.

For twelve days, Śrīla Gurudeva inspired the devotees in Penang with his merciful presence and *hari-kathā*. During this time he mainly spoke about the true meaning of *bhakti* and about Śrī Prahlāda *caritra*. In the course of narrating descriptions of Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja's qualities and teachings, he explained the deep meanings of the following important verses from the Seventh Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*tat sādhu manye 'sura-varya dehinām
sadā samudvigna-dhiyām asad-grahāt
hitvātma-pātaṁ gṛham andha-kūpaṁ
vanam gato yad dharim āśrayeta (7.5.5)*

*śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ
smaṇam pāda-sevanam
arcanam vandanam dāsyam
sakhyam ātma-nivedanam (7.5.23)*

*naiṣām matis tāvad urukramāṅghriṁ
spṛśaty anarthāpagamo yad-arthaḥ
mahīyasām pāda-rajo-'bhiṣekaṁ
niṣkiṣcanānām na vṛṇīta yāvat (7.5.32)*

*kaumāraṁ ācāret prāṇo
dharmān bhāgavatān iha
durlābhaṁ mānuṣaṁ janma
tad apy adhruvam arthadam (7.6.1)*

*guru-śuśrūṣayā bhaktyā
sarva-labdhārpaṇena ca
saṅgena sādhu-bhaktānām
īśvarārādhanena ca (7.7.30)*

After the *hari-kathā* one evening, Śrīman Vijaya-kṛṣṇa Prabhu asked Śrīla Gurudeva about the significance of Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja's life and teachings in relation to Śrīman Mahāprabhu's teachings on *rāga-mārga*.

Śrīla Gurudeva explained to us that all of the previous *ācāryas* actually presented *rāga-mārga bhakti* but, in order to truly practise it, we must carefully proceed through each of the initial stages. At first, we must become tolerant like Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja. If we were to suddenly appear in Vraja with our current nature, we would try to quarrel with the Vrajavāsīs. That is why we remain in this world known as *sādhana-bhumī*, the place where we can progress in our practice of *bhakti*.

On another evening, Dr. Parameśvari humbly sub-mitted a question to Śrīla Gurudeva. He wanted to know if *rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇavas are required to first meditate on and realize all of Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja's teachings before aspiring to achieve our goal of *rādhā-dāsyam*. Śrīla Gurudeva explained that from Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī's *Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* we learn that of the five levels of devotees (*jṣānī-bhaktas*, *śuddha-bhaktas*, *premī-bhaktas*, *premapara-bhaktas*, and *premātura-bhaktas*) Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja is a *jṣānī-bhakta*. The Vrajavāsīs are worshipful for even the *premātura-bhaktas*, the devotees on the highest level, but Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda demonstrated the importance of Śrī Prahlāda's teachings by narrating the entire Śrī Prahlāda *caritra* one hundred and eight times.

Then another devotee addressed Śrīla Gurudeva. He made the point that, like the children in Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja's school, some may say, "Now we have no taste for *bhajana*. Let us enjoy the world for now, and later, when we are old, we will engage in *bhajana*."

Upon hearing this, Śrīla Gurudeva smiled and suggested that the devotee ask the old man sitting in the wheel-chair behind him what sort of *bhajana* is possible in old age. At that moment, the devotee in the wheel-chair took the microphone and enthusiastically addressed Śrīla Gurudeva and the assembled devotees. He expressed his regret that he had not been fortunate enough to meet Śrīla Gurudeva when he was younger and full of energy, and that now, in his old age, so many useless memories from his life constantly plague his mind, making *bhajana* impossible. He lamented that if he had seriously performed *bhajana* since childhood it would have become his fixed habit, but now, in his old age, *bhajana* is not possible. At last he said, "This is what I have learned from Śrīla Gurudeva, and have directly experienced myself."

Śrīla Gurudeva quoted many verses from scriptures and songs corroborating this point.

In one lecture, Śrīla Gurudeva commented on the verse beginning *guru-śuśrūṣayā*. He described the foundational knowledge that must be present for one who wants to perform *bhajana*, and when he commented on the verse beginning *kaumāraṁ ācaret*, he explained the prerequisites for one who is serious about actually starting *bhajana*. Śrīla Gurudeva stressed again

and again the importance of knowing these philosophical conclusions, or *siddhānta*. “Without this knowledge,” he said, “how can we progress on the path of *bhajana*?” He instructed everyone that it is not only essential to understand the *siddhānta* presented in Śrī Prahlāda *caritra*, but, for one who sincerely tries to progress in *bhajana*, it is impossible to avoid it.

Śrīla Gurudeva left the island of Penang on the 16th of April and returned to Kuala Lumpur for a two day festival. About two-hundred devotees gathered there to hear Śrīla Gurudeva’s *hari-kathā*. He requested everyone, “Please carefully study Śrī Prahlāda *caritra* at least one-hundred eight times.”

Hawaii

Especially for the purpose of focusing on translating the sacred books of our Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* and writing commentaries on them, Śrīla Gurudeva flew to the peaceful and *sāttvika* islands of Hawaii on the 19th of April. There, for the next twenty-five days, he remained absorbed in writing and nourishing the devotees with sweet *hari-kathā*.

One night after *hari-kathā*, Śrīman Vṛndāvana dāsa Prabhu asked Śrīla Gurudeva why Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had been especially merciful to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in particular, even though He had so many other exalted followers. Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara Prabhu, Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda Prabhu, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, and Śrī Dāsa Gosvāmī were no less qualified than Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, so what was special about Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī that inspired Mahāprabhu to bestow His special mercy upon him? Śrīla Gurudeva’s simple reply was that Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī is none other than the foremost maidservant, or *maṣjarī*, of the Divine Couple, Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. He is Śrī Rūpa Maṣjarī.

Even Lalitā and Viśākhā may hesitate to enter the *kuṣja* to serve Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, but Śrī Rūpa Maṣjarī will enter the *kuṣja* confidently, without any hesitation, and serve them

appropriately. This is her speciality. Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara and Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda are Lalitā and Viśākhā respectively, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī is Lavaṅga Maṣjarī, and Śrīman Mahāprabhu is Himself the original form of Godhead, Vrajendra-nandana Śyāmasundara, who has accepted the mood and bodily complexion of Śrīmatī Rādhikā.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu came to taste the sweetest essence of love of God (*śrī-rādhāyāḥ praṇaya-mahimā kīdṛśo*) and propagate *rāga-bhakti* and ultimately the *prema* of the *vraja-gopīs*, the highest limit of pure love of God (*anarpita-carīm cirāt*). He knew that His beloved Śrī Rūpa was the most qualified to accomplish this. Therefore, He not only bestowed His own mercy upon him, but He also asked Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda, Śrī Advaitācārya, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, Śrī Sārvbhauma Bhaṭṭācārya and others to also give him their mercy.

The discussion continued for a long time. We asked Śrīla Gurudeva many questions and he gave extraordinary answers based on *śāstra* and surcharged with the authority of his own realization. He established the greatness of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī in every respect.

Another evening, there was a long discussion about Ekādaśī, wherein Śrīla Gurudeva stressed the extreme importance of following Ekādaśī.

Śrīman Brajanātha Prabhu informed Śrīla Gurudeva that Śrīmatī Śyāmarānī Didi had sent an email from Australia expressing a doubt some of the devotees there had regarding Ekādaśī *tattva*. They observed that although all of the most abominable sins (such as killing a cow or a *brāhmaṇa*) reside in grains on the day of Ekādaśī, still, when foodstuffs are offered to the deity they become *nirguṇa* (untouched by the modes of nature). Consequently, they did not understand the actual basis for prohibiting the acceptance of grain-*prasāda* on Ekādaśī.

In reply, Śrīla Gurudeva explained that there is no question of Śrī Jagannātha incurring sin, for he is the Supreme Enjoyer Himself, but the *sādhaka* is required to fast on Ekādaśī for his own benefit, not for the Lord's. He further explained that although grains offered to Śrī Kṛṣṇa are in fact free from sin, even on Ekādaśī, the act of disregarding the injunctions of *śāstra* for fasting on Ekādaśī is itself a severe offence. The conclusion is that we should not eat any preparations cooked with grains on fast days, even after they become transcendental *prasāda*.

Śrīman Brajanātha Prabhu then inquired if it was an offence to offer grains to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu on Ekādaśī, for although Mahāprabhu is the Supreme Lord Himself, He is in the mood of a devotee. In response, Śrīla Gurudeva narrated the special pastime of baby Nimai crying incessantly until He was allowed to take the grains offered to the deity by His dear devotee, Śrī Jagadīśa. It is therefore very appropriate that in all Gauḍīya Māṭhas, as well as in the households of all Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, Mahāprabhu is offered grains on Ekādaśī. Still, with the intention of teaching the world to fast on Ekādaśī, Mahāprabhu always strictly observed this fast.

In response to a question raised by Śrīman Acyutānanda Brahmācārī, Śrīla Gurudeva narrated one of Mahāprabhu's pastime's in Jagannātha Purī: Once, on Ekādaśī, some envious priests who wanted to defame Mahāprabhu by making Him break his fast, presented Him and His associates many varieties of *prasāda*, insisting that they not disregard the rule that one immediately honour *mahā-prasāda* upon receiving it. Mahāprabhu and His associates immediately responded by circumambulating the *prasādam*, glorifying it with prayers and *kīrtana*, and dancing in ecstasy throughout the night. In the morning everyone bathed in the ocean, chanted their *mantras*, and then broke their fast by serving Śrī Jagannātha *mahā-prasādam*.

Toward the end of the discussion, Śrīman Madhuvrata Brahmācārī inquired about Śrī Nanda Mahārāja's observance of the Ekādaśī-vrata. In reply Śrīla Gurudeva quoted *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.28.1):

ekādaśyām nirāhāraḥ

samabhyarcya janārdanam

snātum nandas tu kālindīyām

dvādaśyām jalam āviśat

Śrī Sukadeva Gosvāmī said: O King Parikṣit, Nanda Mahārāja observed fasting on the day of Ekādaśī and performed worship of Lord Janārdana. Then he entered the water of the Kālindī in the night to take his bath.

When Śrī Nanda Mahārāja entered the water of the Yamunā, he did not realize that it was still the demoniac period of the night just prior to the auspicious *brahma-muhūrta*. As he was bathing, the messengers of Lord Varuṇa appeared and abducted him, and brought him to Varuṇaloka. In the end, Kṛṣṇa rescued him from Varuṇaloka and accepted Varuṇadeva's worship.

Śrīla Gurudeva quoted many verses from *śāstra* establishing the glories of following the Ekādaśī-vrata and, by the end of the discussion, everyone felt that their faith in Ekādaśī had swelled.

On the 15th of May Śrīla Gurudeva left Hawaii for mainland America. He made a surprise stop in Los Angeles for two days, which overjoyed the many sincere devotees serving Śrīla Gurudeva's preaching mission there. On the 18th of May he arrived in Houston.

Houston, Texas

The Houston festival began on the 29th of May. The devotees called it the "Festival of Love and Devotion". More than five-hundred devotees came from all over America and even from Europe, South and Central America, and India. Many new people from Houston also attended.

On the first evening, Śrīla Gurudeva worshipped the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* by offering *bhoga* and *ārati* with his own hands. The sacred text was then taken on procession, circumambulating the temple, while everyone performed *kīrtana*. During the procession, the ladies carried on their heads many auspicious *kalaśas* (traditional brass water-pots) that were filled with water, covered by mango leaves, and capped by coconuts. Every night during the festival, Śrīla Gurudeva had all the devotees worship *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the literary incarnation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, with *ārati* and *kīrtana*.

Śrīmatī Śyāmarāṇī Didi inquired by email after the Houston festival about the underlying significance of the tradition of carrying water-pots and about the importance of the various ingredients placed in them. Śrīla Gurudeva ordered me to explain the meaning of this tradition so I explained that in

many places in scripture it has been declared that mango leaves are especially pure and auspicious, and should be placed over the *kalaśa* during auspicious ceremonies. They are also traditionally draped above doors of temples or homes for this reason. Regarding coconuts, there is a delightful Sanskrit poem found in *śāstra*:

vrksāgre vasati na ca pakśirāja

ambu vahanti na hi meghamālā

trinetradhārī na hi sulapānī

valkala paridhāna na ca rāmacandra

It lives on a tree but is not a bird, it carries water but is not a cloud, it has three eyes but is not Mahādeva Śiva, and it is clothed in bark but is not Lord Rāma, as he lives in exile in the forest.

The coconut is completely pure and famous as a life-giving fruit. It contains both sweet water, which is a symbol of life, and extremely nourishing fruit. Thus in ancient Vedic culture, the coconut has always been regarded as extremely dear.

After performing *ārati*, Śrīla Gurudeva began the *hari-kathā* by glorifying Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja, who brought *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to the Western world. He explained that because of this, all the devotees and guests present had come to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and, because of this, he himself is successfully preaching the message of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* all over the world.

In the course of the festival He gradually revealed the glories of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. He explained that the entire *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is a glorification of Śrī Rādhā yet it always speaks about Her in a secretive way (through hints and indications). Śrī Rādhā is the *svarūpa-śakti* of Lord Kṛṣṇa. She is never separate from Him, both in Her manifest forms as well as in Her unmanifest forms. Therefore *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is actually the literary incarnation of the Divine Couple, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

New Vraja (Badger, California)

On the 7th of June Śrīla Gurudeva left Houston. He stayed in the home of his disciples in Las Vegas, Nevada, for three days to recover his strength. On the 9th of June he arrived in the Bay Area. For three days, he held programs in Chinatown, Oakland. Then on the 12th of June, he arrived in the New Vraja community in Badger, California for the twelfth annual festival there, greeted by more than two-hundred devotees. Every evening, over seven-hundred devotees intently listened to his *hari-kathā*. He remained among the blissful devotees of New Vraja for seven days and then returned to San Francisco for a day before flying to New York.

New York

Śrīla Gurudeva arrived in New York on the 28th of June and remained there for four days. In his classes there, he warned everyone that no amount of advancement in material science is capable of finally stopping the problem of birth, disease and death, for these problems are inseparable features of material nature. Furthermore, such so-called advancement has all but destroyed the love and harmony that was prevalent in bygone ages. That love and harmony can still be seen to a slight degree in some rural villages of Bhārata-varśa, but in Western countries, it has disappeared almost completely. The thirsts and hungers of our bodies have escalated to such an extent that they have forcefully killed the needs of our souls. Advancement of material science alone can never make us happy, yet in this modern age, to be spiritually inclined is considered foolish. This is a complete misconception. Real progress is only possible if science and religion go hand in hand, otherwise not.

On the 2nd of July, Śrīla Gurudeva arrived in Holland. He remained with the devotees there for four days and then travelled by automobile to the location of the European Hari-kathā Festival at a beautiful park about two hours from Frankfurt, Germany.

Germany

In Germany, more than eight-hundred devotees and guests from all parts of the world assembled together for one of the largest devotional gatherings in the West.

Every evening after *bhajan*s Śrīla Gurudeva spoke about the glories of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and pure devotional service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Every morning he spoke with groups of devotees and guests representing different countries. For two hours at a time, he gave his full attention to each devotee, one after the other. In this way, he spoke to the devotees of a few countries each day.

One evening he instructed the devotees:

“We should try to be like Parikṣit Mahārāja. He was cursed to die after seven days. He forgot to take *prasādam*, and he did not even drink any water. During those seven days he did not sleep. Day and night he was engaged in hearing *hari-kathā*. After seven days, he left his body without any suffering and went to Goloka Vṛndāvana. We should try to hear with the same absorption as Parikṣit Mahārāja.”

On the 12th of July, three-hundred devotees went in four large busses to the city of Kassel to perform *śrī harināma-saṅkīrtana*. They sang and danced through the crowded streets of Kassel, kindly escorted by policemen. Kiśorī-

mohan Prabhu, Purandarācārya Prabhu and Śrīpad Nemi Mahārāja led all the devotees in beautiful *kīrtanas* for about two hours, while some distributed flyers and books alongside the party. Thousands of onlookers stopped to watch and listen to the *saṅkīrtana* in amazement, and to ask for books.

On the last night of the festival, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja addressed the assembled devotees:

“I am very happy that our festival is so successful. So many devotees from different parts of the world have come here and are hearing patiently. All of our *sannyasīs* and other speakers have explained *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* very well. On this world tour, I have spoken about these topics in places like Houston, Texas, and now here. The subject matter is vast. One verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* can be glorified for seven days, for an entire month but we have explained them only very briefly. I wanted to explain Gopī-gīta, Bhramara-gīta and Uddhava-saṁvāda, but I could not. There was not sufficient time. We have explained, to some extent, whatever we could. We have only touched the surface of the ocean water, but we have not entered the ocean of *rasa*, the sweet pastimes of Kṛṣṇa.

“My request is that those who are hearing this sweet *hari-kathā* should take its essence into their hearts. I have heard that in many places, many senior devotees do not follow properly. They do not chant their *guru-mantra*, and they smoke or even gamble.

“My request is that you should all be very careful regarding these things. Don’t smoke marijuana or cigarettes. Daily chant your *dīkṣā-mantras*, and chant at least sixteen rounds of *hari-nāma*. I will be happy if you chant more than this. Also, I want all of you to distribute my books. First read them, and realize their essence. After that, distribute them to others.

“I want that everyone in the audience should bring at least one or two new devotees to this *hari-kathā* festival next year. This will be a very great service to Kṛṣṇa. Giving donations for a mundane cause or even building hospitals and so on is not at all equal to helping someone by bringing them to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This will be a very great service to Kṛṣṇa. Remember all this.

“Don’t be weak. *Brahmacārīs* and *sannyasīs* should be very strong by hearing *hari-kathā*. They should read about the lives of Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī and our other great *ācāryas*. Those to whom I have given saffron cloth must be very strong. If they think they are in danger of falling down from their development in *bhakti*, they should come to India and stay for some time. Thus they may be saved.”

On the 14th of July, Śrīla Gurudeva returned to Holland by automobile, where his next flight would depart from. Then he returned to Bhārata-varṣa, concluding his summer world preaching tour just prior to Lord Jagannātha’s Ratha-yātrā festival in Śrī Jagannātha Purī-dhāma.

i A similar verse appears in *Çré Caitanya-caritāmāta* (Ädi-lélä 6.85): “*keha māne, keha nā māne, saba täira dāsa* – Everyone is a servant of Çré Caitanya, even if some accept Him as Bhagavān and others do not.”

ii According to Çréla Bhaktivinoda Öhäkura, the society of Çré Gaurāṅga has two divisions: the *bhajana* section and the section that focuses on external work. The division a person belongs to depends on his *adhikāra*, or qualification.

iii One of the definitions of *çuddha-bhakta* given by Çréla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvaté Prabhupāda is one who is free from the desire for wealth, women and fame.

iv When all types of people congregate in assemblies organized by devotees or faithful people, a general assembly of Gaurāṅga is formed.

v In the original Bengli article, the words used were *kértana-carcā-mandira* and *nātya-mandira*. A *kértana-carcā-mandira* is the part of the temple wherein the message of Godhead is discussed and the *nātya-mandira* is the section in front of the altar where the devotees worship the Lord, especially through *sankértana*.

vi Compare with the story of Gopa-kumāra in *Båhad-bhāgavatāmāta*. In each successive chapter, Gopa-kumāra meets devotees who possess progressively higher degrees of love for Bhāgavan.

vii These four gradations are illustrated as follows: The stage of *taruëa* is seen in the tender love of the *gopés* before their first meeting with Kåñëa (*pürva-rāga*). The stage of *kaññaya* is seen in the love of those *gopés* who were checked by their husbands and other family members when Kåñëa called them with His flute, whereas the stage of *pakva* is seen in the love of the *gopés* who abandoned everything and were able to go to Him at that time. When Kåñëa left the *gopés* after *rāsa-lélä*, He submerged them in separation from Him and removed their pride (each *gopé* had perceived that Kåñëa was dancing exclusively with her and thus she developed pride in her extreme good fortune – *saubhāgya-mada*). Subsequently, they sang *Gopé-géta* feeling the severe pain of separation from Him. When He reappeared, *mahā-rāsa* began. The *gopés'* condition at that time illustrates *prapakva*, or fully ripened *parakéya-bhāva*. It is solely this final stage of *parakéya-bhāva* that Kåñëa wants to relish.

viii There are five ingredients of *rasa*. They are *sthayé-bhāva* (the devotee's eternal relationship with Divinity rooted in his own particular mode of service); *vibhāva* (the three supporting ingredients of love, namely, the Supreme Object upon which love depends, the individual who is the reservoir of love for Him, and the stimulus which rouses that love); *anubhāva* (the ingredient of loving emotions deep within the heart realized through various outward expressions); *sāttvika-bhāva* (the ingredient of ecstatic bodily transformations); and *vyabhicāré-bhāva* (the ingredient of powerful rising and falling moods brought about by loving exchanges).

ix The world emperor, Parékñit Mahārāja, had been cursed to die in seven days. Thus he renounced his kingdom and heard *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam* from Çréla Çukadeva Gosvāmé without interruption until his death.

x “Absolute Personality” appears in English in the original Bengali article.

xi The unauthorized system of *pañcopāsana* entails worship of five principal controllers of the material universe: Viñëu, Çiva, Ganeça, Sürya, and Durgä. Adherents of the *pañcopāsana* system consider the forms of these five deities temporary and imaginary and meditate on them as a means to ultimately merge in impersonal *brahma*.

xii Filibusters are those who needlessly attack peaceful nations.

xiii Äñäòha is the third month of the Bengali calendar and falls between June and July. Çréla Bhaktivinoda Öhäkura disappeared on the new moon day (*amävasyā*) of this month in the year 1914.

xiv The four faults of the conditioned soul’s senses: (1) *bhrama* – illusion, or the tendency to come to the wrong conclusion based on appearances, (2) *pramāda* – the tendency to make errors in general, (3) *vipralipsā* – the tendency to deceive as characterized by baseless denial of something beyond the senses, and (4) *karaëpāöava* – the insufficiency and limitations of the senses.

xv It will be explained that Çréla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvaté Öhäkura is the intended meaning of *siddhānta-vāné*.

xvi The object of one’s service, or the personality to whom one renders service, is known as the *sevya*, and the servant is known as the *sevaka*. In this sentence *sevya-sevaka-bhāva* can be understood in two ways: (1) In the mood of a *sevaka*, Çréla Öhäkura is worshipping *sevya*, Çré Bhagavān or (2) Çréla Öhäkura is accepting our service in the mood of the *sevya* and simultaneously serving his worshipful Lord in the mood of *sevaka*.

xvii Mäyävädés consider *mäyā*, the basis of the material world, to be neither *sat* (real) nor *asat* (unreal). Thus, they claim, *mäyā* is inexplicable (*anirvacanéya*).

xviii From Çréla Jéva Gosvāmé’s *Tattva-sandharbha* (Text 40), we learn that the Mäyävädé followers of Çré Çankarācārya use the example of mistaking a rope for a snake to prove that worldly existence (*vyavahāra*) is neither real (*sat*) nor unreal (*asat*) and is thus inexplicable. Their logic is as follows: If snakes were not real, then there would be no possibility of mistaking a rope in the darkness to be a snake, for a nonexistent thing can never be conceived of. Thus, they explain, the mistaken perception of the snake is not unreal, nor is it actually real, for in the light it will be seen that no snake is present. Thus the Mäyävädés conclude that a third, inexplicable (*anirvacanéya*) category exists which is neither *sat* nor *asat*, and they claim that *mäyā* is of this third category.

^{xix} Initially, one obtains the ability to do *ārādhana* (loving worship) – in the stage of *sādhana* – by mercy, and later mercy alone gives the result of that *sādhana* – the *sādhya* (or *prema-bhakti*). Hence attainment of the *prayojana* completely depends on mercy.

^{xx} From the viewpoint of an etymologist, the word '*sādhya*' indicates "that which can be attained through performing *sādhana* and is thus dependent on *sādhana*". But in reality, the attainment of the *sādhya* is beyond the reach of *sādhana*. Thus it is clear that the imperfections of language are interfering with the actual definition of *sādhya*.

^{xxi} "Directly visible" (*pratyakñā*) is parallel to "the cultivation of constant endeavours to serve" (*anuçéłana*), and "the basis and substance of all their thoughts" (*anumāna*) is parallel to "constant meditation" (*dhyāna*).

^{xxii} The root *mana* means "mind" and *tra* means "to deliver". Thus, a *mantra* is that which frees the soul from the platform of mental speculation.

^{xxiii} The most general meanings of *karma* include both action and the result, or product, of action. The literal meaning of *abhyāsa* is to concentrate, practise, exercise, or study something repeatedly.

^{xxiv} The literal meaning of *véra* is "strength", and the meaning of *nagara* is "town" or "city".

^{xxv} The lunar day of the new moon is called *amāvasyā*. It is the last day of the waning moon and it leaves the night completely dark. Therefore, with respect to mundane considerations, it is an inauspicious *tithi* (lunar day). Çréla Bhakti Prajñāna Keçava Gosvāmé Mahārāja has concluded by reconciling the apparent contradiction of auspiciousness in inauspiciousness. The event of Çréla Öhäkura's disappearance, although apparently leaving the world in darkness, is a most auspicious celebration due to the special opportunity to remember and glorify him. Thus, this dark *tithi*, the day of separation from Çréla Öhäkura, has become illuminated by auspiciousness.

^{xxvi} The *karma-kāēòà* section of the Vedas delineates fruitive activities and their temporary results.

^{xxvii} On the front cover of the thirty-third volume of *Çré Gauòéya Patrikā* was a photograph of Çré Çré Guru-Gaurāiga-Rādhā-vinoda-bihariju.

^{xxviii} Baikimacandra was a Bengali novelist who lived at the time of Çréla Bhaktivinoda Öhäkura. His speculative descriptions of Çré Çré Rādhā-Kāñēa's pastimes won him much acclaim.

^{xxix} Çré Guru is only satisfied when he successfully makes the devotees relish the nectar of serving Lord Hari in one of these four *rasas* according to their own *svarūpa*, or eternal identity.

^{xxx} The general meaning of *mahā-prasāda* is “remnants of foodstuffs offered to Çré Kāñëa”. However, in the festival of the *Gauḍéya*, distribution of *mahā-prasāda* refers to broadcasting, in the form of *hari-kathā* and *kértana*, the glories of the pastimes wherein *viñaya* relishes the service moods (*sevā-bhāva*) of the *āçraya* in one of the four *rasas*. This is how the word *mahā-prasāda* should be interpreted throughout this article.

^{xxxi} Just as the use of the word *mahā-prasāda* throughout this article has a dual meaning, similarly, although *bhoga* generally refers to unoffered foodstuffs, its use here also indicates the *jévas* who are gradually being prepared to serve Çré Kāñëa.

^{xxxii} Çrématé Rādhikā cooks the *bhoga*, associates such as Mother Yaçodā offer it, and Bhagavān Çré Kāñëa Himself enjoys it.

^{xxxiii} Çrématé Rādhikā prepares many different arrangements in different *rasas* for Çré Kāñëa’s satisfaction. When He relishes them, She becomes satisfied, and in turn, Her satisfaction causes Her friends like Lalitā-sakhé to become fully satisfied.

^{xxxiv} In this context, *mahā-mahā-prasāda* indicates that when any *rūpānuga* devotee relishes within his heart the descriptions of *çré kāñëa-lélā* from *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam*, which are the *mahā-prasāda* of Çré Çuka, then when he explains them to others, they become even more sweet and potent.

^{xxxv} The *mahā-mahā-prasāda* being referred to here as the eternal, sublime substance is the devotees’ descriptions of Çré Kāñëa’s pastimes as well their descriptions of His own words and instructions.

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^{xlv} The four ages (*catur-yuga*) cycle continuously, through Satya, Treta, Dvāpara, and Kali *yugas* which last 1,782,000 years, 1,296,000 years, 864,000 years, and 432,000 years respectively. When 71 of these cycles are taken together, they comprise one *manvantara* lasting more than 300 million years. Each *manvantara* marks the beginning of a new epoch of Manu, or progenitor of mankind. In one of Lord Brahmā's days there are 14 epochs of Manu. Çré Caitanya Mahāprabhu appears once in a day of Brahmā (every 8.7 billion years) in the Kali-yuga of the twenty-eighth *catur-yuga* during the reign of Vaivasvata Manu, the seventh of the fourteen epochs of Manu.

^{xlvi} The words *kāñëa-varëam* can either be interpreted as "uttering the syllables *kā-ñëa*" or "Kāñëa's complexion".

^{xlvii} According to *Tattva-sandarbha*, "*antaù kãñëaà bahir gauraà*" does not mean that Çré Caitanya Mahāprabhu is black inside and golden outside. The word *kāñëa-varëam* in this verse means "*antaù kãñëam* – internally He is Kāñëa Himself (*kāñëa-tattva*)", and the word *tviñākãñëam* means "*bahir gauram* – outwardly He is Gaurasundara".

^{xlviii} When a person vows to renounce the world by remaining in one holy place for his entire life, it is called *kñëtra-sannyāsa*.

^{xlix} Because Çré Kāñëa's younger sister was Uttarā's mother-in-law, He was like her uncle.

¹ Complete lists can be found in *Bhakti-rasāmāta-sindhu-bindu* and the third division of *Jaiva-dharma* concerning *rasa-tattva*.